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Table of international exchange rates for various currencies including the US Dollar, British Pound, and others.

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Inside: a special seasonal G2 with quizzes, prize crossword, Christmas TV & radio

Santa Claus on the cover



It's A Wonderful Life: Feel good or film noir?

Fiancée facing murder charge

Tracey Andrews, 27, of Alvechurch, Worcester, had been held at Eastwood Park women's prison, near Gloucester, over the weekend. Her bail conditions stipulate that she return to her parents' home, less than 1 1/2 miles from the murder scene, and not contact any witnesses.



Tracey Andrews leaving Eastwood Park prison yesterday

Brown seeks to remove breaks for high earners

Labour's 'fair tax' for rich

The Labour Party is drafting a radical restructuring of the tax system in an effort to introduce a greater degree of fairness into personal taxation. The plan is designed to land more revenue and assist a Labour chancellor to balance the nation's books without scaring the well-off.



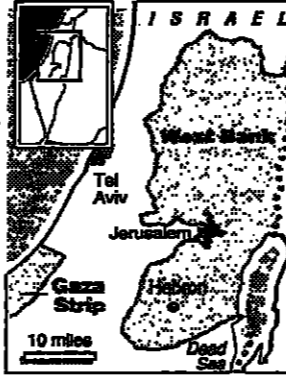
The Conservatives began the process under Chancellor Nigel Lawson when tax relief on pensions contributions was capped at £2,000. However, a Labour chancellor could potentially raise a huge amount of funds by ratcheting down the tax relief on pensions from 40 per cent — for upper band taxpayers earning £26,100 or more per year — and bringing it down towards the basic rate of tax.

Peace breakthrough nears in Hebron

US envoy helps draw two sides together to hammer out Israeli withdrawal deal. Jessica Berry and Ian Black report

ISRAEL and the Palestinians appeared last night to have clinched a breakthrough agreement on an Israeli pullback from the West Bank town of Hebron, breathing new life into the Middle East peace process on the eve of a Christmas deadline set by the American president, Bill Clinton.

with a process whose momentum stalled under the previous Labour government of the late Yitzhak Rabin and has become dangerously deadlocked under Mr Netanyahu. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation have accused each other of foot-dragging in more than three months of talks on the city, 80 per cent of which was due to have been handed over to Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority months ago.



governor's office but officials declined to say whether final funds are treated by the tax system where relief costs the exchequer £8 billion a year. At present pension contributions, the most widespread of the middle class welfare benefits, attract relief on the contributions made, the dividends earned, and the capital gains which arise from City events such as takeover bids.

Advertisement for Bass beer featuring a Christmas tree and the text 'Turkey, broken fairy lights, relatives, turkey, chitty chitty, bang bang, relatives. Yo-ho-ho.'

Inside

Table of contents for the 'Inside' section, listing pages for Britain, World News, Finance, Sport, Comment and Letters, and Obituaries.

Advertisement for Bass beer featuring a bottle and the text 'BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777'.

'The rebels might have methods we disagree with but they are part of Peru'

Jane Diaz-Limaco on the Lima releases

AN HOUR after being freed with 224 other hostages by Peruvian guerrillas, Briton Roger Church celebrated yesterday with a glass of cold beer at home with his wife, Catherine, and his two sons.

Looking fresh despite everything, a smiling Mr Church said: "This has been a difficult few days and I'm just pleased to be out and reunited with my family. My thoughts are still with those left inside."

Last night 140 people remained captive as the siege of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima by Tupac Amaru guerrillas entered its seventh day. They included the Peruvian foreign minister, Francisco Tudela, the former prime minister, Dante Cordova, several high-ranking police and military officers, and diplomats.

"The treatment during my time was that there was no threat... There was a threat in that they were arming arms but at no time was any body mistreated as far as I'm aware," said Mr Church. He added that he was held with other diplomats on the second



The freed British diplomat Roger Church (left), watched by London's ambassador, John Illman, talks to reporters in Lima. PHOTOGRAPH: BLAKE SELL

floor and was not allowed to move about or go downstairs by about 18 mostly young and heavily armed rebels.

The former Peruvian economy minister, Gustavo Saberein, was among the 225 people released in what the rebels called a Christmas goodwill gesture.

Conditions were appalling, Mr Saberein said. The hostages were split among 10 to 12 rooms and he was confined to a room measuring four metres by six with 38 other people, including a newspaper editor, Manuel Romero, and the former employment minister, Sandro Fuentes.

The rebels had lodged a table on its side against the window as a shield. "At night we were practically lying elbow to elbow, head to feet," Mr Saberein said.

A great problem, he added, was that of sanitation, with only six bathrooms at most among about 400 people. Portable lavatories brought in by the Red Cross only partly eased the situation.

The hostages organised themselves into teams to clean and to distribute food and medicine, and delegates

for each room were elected.

Most of the time, Mr Saberein said, was spent in political debate. "We spent hours and hours talking about politics and the economy either with the subversives or among ourselves."

He said almost all the hostages felt extreme rage at the government for cutting off the water supply to the residence and disappointment at hearing President Alberto Fujimori's hard-line speech.

Mr Saberein said that after hours of talking to the rebels: "There was a total change in people's attitude... The rebels might have methods we disagree with but in the end they are part of Peru."

Among those most frustrated by the situation, he said, was the foreign minister, Mr Tudela, who had tried to telephone two secret numbers for the government palace. When the minister identified himself, the person at

the other end repeatedly hung up, said Mr Saberein.

"I think the government officials felt abandoned by the government."

Other freed hostages said that each guerrilla patrolled the residence with a belt of grenades or explosives, presumably ready to blow up themselves and their captives, if necessary.

Uniformed rebels, some with shaved heads, strode through the corridors carrying automatic weapons, said Eduardo Marron, a professor at Lima's Pacific University.

The hostages talked for hours with the guerrilla leader, Nestor Cerpa, only realising who he was after a television broadcast showed his photo.

While the crisis for those inside may have eased physically by the reduction of the number of hostages, the psychological pressure has increased.

"The rebels said they would 'review' the situation of the Asian and Latin American diplomats still held but would refuse to hand over anyone connected with government policy until Mr Fujimori released around 400 jailed Tupac Amaru members."

At the residence yesterday Red Cross officials continued to shuttle water, blankets, medicine and food into the building in the only apparent sign of contact.

A merry night with girls in pearls

TV review

Nancy Banks-Smith

THE merriest moment of the night was Tanya Buchanan, twirling her long blonde hair into a top-knot, telling the Country Life photographer, "You've got a cobweb on your crotch."

He had, too. And so have more of us than care to admit it.

Tanya was what any other magazine would call a pin-up. Country Life call their famous frontispiece girls in pearls. Like the mansions at the back of Country Life, the girls at the front are glossy, beautiful and you know you can't afford them. So stop dribbling.

Technically celebrating the magazine's centenary, An Everyday Story of Country Life (BBC 2) was a glorious Christmas treat... a programme. You pick up the remote and pulled... A woman plums as the news... Michael Heseltine... Country Life in the... according to Mrs Heseltine... "It always looks a bit dumpy and crumpled."

Tony Blair proved oddly elusive, though Caroline Fetherstonhaugh temptingly demonstrated a catlike shapely like the door of No 10 Downing Street.

Melanie Cable-Alexander (the names alone are worth the cover price) was interviewed by Willie Forbes, a Scottish taxidermist. "His accent is delicious but not that easy to comprehend."

Willie surveyed a stuffed buffalo with pride and said all too clearly, "A charging buffalo is considered one of the most powerful laxatives in the world."

Back in the gutter, Brookside (Channel 4) is on fire. A pair of jeans tumbles up the stairs of Casa Bevon and torches the place. Baby Kylie is flung from an upstairs window. Ron, built for staying power rather than speed, struggles out with Jackie Corkhill in his arms.

Everyone assumes that Jimmy Corkhill, the resident scally, did it. Jimmy, adopting an unaccustomed air of injured innocence, claims, very plausibly, that he fell asleep watching telly. His stubble has reached unprecedented proportions before it turns out that Bev, a woman scorned, did it.

By the way, Casa Corkhill, known variously as No. 10 Brookside Close or 'The Ouse of O'rors, is currently on the market for a tempting £25,000. What do you reckon? — bearing in mind that Our Little Square, his wife and his wife's lover, Glover, were having their customary fight on the forecourt when they noticed that the nursery was on fire. Glover the lover rescued his son before he was felled by a flaming curtain rod.

And joined Jackie Corkhill in Casualty.

Meanwhile, Simon Callow, wreathed in distracting whiskers, is giving An Audience with Charles Dickens (BBC 2) plenty of welly. Last night, The Murder of Nancy. I don't know why. That's a story that never appealed to me.

Howard fails crime and punishment targets

'Hi-De-Hi' holiday camp to become a prison

ALAN Travis Home Affairs Editor

FORMER Pontin's holiday camp is to be made into an emergency prison as a wave of "not-in-my-back-yard" protests has laid waste to the Government's plans for a crash building programme to meet rising inmate numbers.

Doncaster council yesterday blocked plans for the prison service to turn a former RAF base into a temporary camp holding 1,000 inmates, arguing that the South Yorkshire town is already Britain's jail capital with four new prisons in recent years.

A successful local protest movement, Doncaster Against More Prisons, yesterday handed in an 8,000-signature petition against the new jail.

The same "nimby" backlash against new prisons has also stalled for more than four years the Government's plans to open a £100 million national network of child jails, or secure training centres, to lock up persistent juvenile offenders.

In a move which will confound even satirists, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is to house up to 700 inmates in converted "Hi-De-Hi style" chalets at the Morcombe Bay holiday camp at Heysham, a holiday village on the Lancashire coast.

The 62-acre site, once a second world war internment camp, closed two years ago after many years service as a holiday centre. The chalets will be converted for use as a Category C low security closed prison with an austere environment, said prison chiefs yesterday.

Last night the Director-General of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, said he was planning his hopes on the holiday camp and a floating prison ship to be moored in Portland Harbour, near Weymouth, Dorset, to avert a crisis in February. Both, however, need planning permission.

The prison population reached a record 53,500 last week and is expected to surge again after Christmas. The only alternative to new accommodation is the use of expensive police



The former Pontin's camp at Heysham

cells — an option already centred by MPs.

Mr Tilt yesterday admitted that "nimbyism" was a big problem for the Prison Service. Doncaster's RAF Finningley has been blocked, and a planned new prison at Telford, Shropshire, lost, because of local objections. Other new jails at Walton, Liverpool, and Salford, Greater Manchester, have been delayed because of local protests.

"We are getting pushed into more and more remote sites which are not entirely satisfactory and make maintaining family links for prisoners much harder," Mr Tilt said.

The problem has been sharpened for Home Office planners trying to set up a national network of secure training centres for the most persistent teenage offenders. They should have been up and running more than a year ago.

So far only one of the five contracts has been let and not a single brick has been laid. Planning permission has been refused for centres at Campfield House, Oxfordshire, and Gringley in Nottinghamshire. Plans for the third at Medomsley, Durham, await the outcome of a public inquiry. The fourth at Onley, Northamptonshire, has yet to go through the planning process. Only one, Cookham Wood STC in Kent, has received approval.

Leader comment, page 8

Police numbers drop despite Tory pledge

ALAN Travis

THE number of police officers in England and Wales has fallen by nearly 1,000 since the last general election, ministers have admitted, despite John Major's promises to put more on the beat.

The admission slipped out in parliamentary answers on the last day before the Christmas recess.

Mr Major and Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, have boasted about extra funding for the police and the disclosure will hit the Government's claim to be the party of law and order in the run-up to next year's general election.

The 1992 Conservative manifesto promised to increase police strength by 1,000 officers. It was followed by the Prime Minister's pledge at the third at Medomsley, Durham, await the outcome of a public inquiry. The fourth at Onley, Northamptonshire, has yet to go through the planning process. Only one, Cookham Wood STC in Kent, has received approval.

Chief constables have claimed Mr Howard has cut

equipment such as CS sprays and stab-proof vests, and on new technology such as the creation of a national DNA database.

The Home Office figures show that the Metropolitan Police has 755 fewer officers than in 1992. Merseyside has lost 416, South Wales 269, Avon and Somerset 64, and Devon and Cornwall 42. Twenty-four of the 43 forces in England and Wales have fewer police than they did after the last election. One force, Lancashire, has exactly the same number.

Of the remaining 18 forces, which have increased their numbers since 1992, for 10 the rise is by fewer than 70. The largest rises have been in the West Midlands — up 268 — and in Gwent — up 233.

Mr Howard has boasted that he has made £20 million available this year which was supposed to pay for an extra 1,000 officers.

The Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Alex Carlile, who put down the Commons questions, said: "The Tories have broken their 1992 manifesto commitment on police numbers. Now they look set to break another. We cannot believe them when it comes to bubbles on the beat."

"Instead of the promised 6,000 new officers, we have lost nearly 1,000. At a time of rising crime this is not good enough."

— Home Office, December 1996

"We have found the resources to put over the next three years, not 500, but an extra 5,000 officers on the beat."

— John Major, October 1995

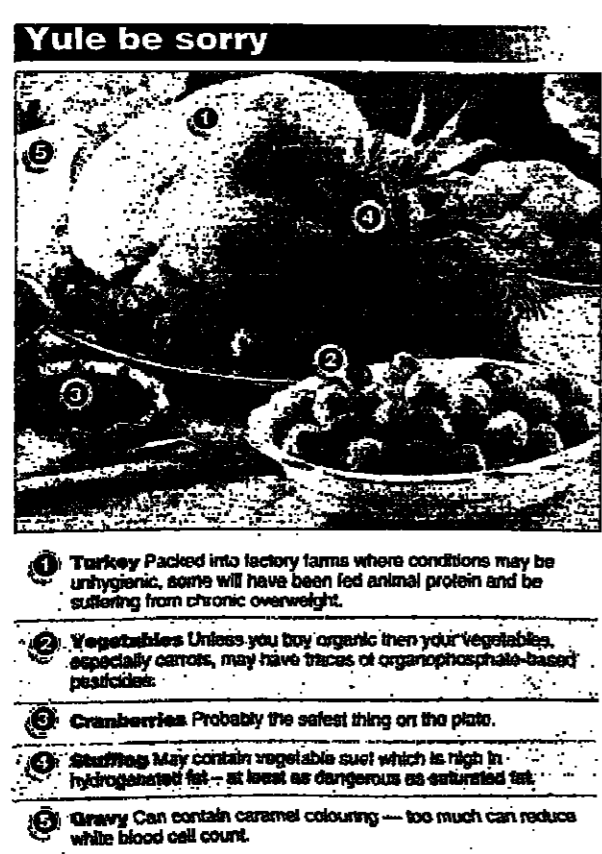
"We are well on track to delivering the first 1,000 officers promised last year"

— Michael Howard, October 1996

Police numbers fell by 993 between 1992 and 1996.

— Home Office, December 1996

Turkey and trimmings on our dinner plates come stuffed with unpalatable chemicals



Yule be sorry

ALX Bello

MILLIONS of Britons will sit down tomorrow for a Christmas feast of turkey with cranberry sauce and roast vegetables.

Though considered traditional fare, the meal is a Victorian invention, and its main ingredients came originally from north America.

To satisfy the huge demand for this one-off meal, producers are using increasingly intensive methods of production. Turkeys are reared in factory farms, vegetable are grown as hybrids, and soon many products will include genetically engineered crops.

"The Christmas meal is a good illustration of the globalisation process. In a very short space of time what would keep millions fed is given to the overfed," says Tim Lang, professor of food policy at Thames Valley University.

"We need to be aware that this enormous sucking sound of the vacuum cleaner of our collective stomachs has huge implications around the world."

Turkeys — originally from America — can fly in the wild at speeds of up to 50 miles an hour. Most of the birds eaten

tomorrow will have been grown in a space insufficient for them to stretch their wings fully.

Even though not carnivores, their feed can contain meat, possibly poultry. They are bred to gain weight very rapidly and as a result many have impaired hips and legs.

To minimise aggression between birds, 10 per cent of chicks are debeaked — sliced off with a red hot blade or clippers — according to the British Turkey Information Service.

Only 2 to 4 per cent of the 12 million turkeys sold this Christmas will have been raised free range.

Tim O'Brien, head of research at Compassion in World Farming, said: "It is surely commonsense that animals raised for food should be kept in reasonably hygienic conditions. Farm animal welfare and human health are inextricably linked."

Unless you buy organic, all the Christmas fruit and vegetables you eat will have been sprayed with pesticide. Cranberry farming probably uses the least.

The cranberry is one of only three fruits native to north America (the other two are blueberries and Concord grapes), and it is most likely

that the origin of your sauce is the Ocean Spray co-operative, in Massachusetts. The highlight of the intensive farming process is a machine that bounces each berry over seven four-inch-high wooden walls. A cranberry's quality is measured by its ability to bounce, and those that fail the test are discarded.

The vegetables on your plate most likely will have been grown in Britain.

After a scare last year concerning an organophosphate pesticide used to combat carrot root fly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food now urges consumers to peel and top carrots.

Half of carrots tested by the ministry contained residues of organophosphates, part of the family of nerve gases linked to Gulf War Syndrome, exceeding the "acceptable daily intake" by up to three times. Between 1 and 3 per cent had 25 times more than expected.

"Most people who read about the effects of nerve gases would be shocked that the same group of chemicals are routinely used to grow a wide range of crops. This includes cereals and most importantly root vegetables," says Joanna Flythman, author of The Food We Eat.

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John 10/12/20

Succeeding with Shakespeare

Firms' managers urged to the breach



Rallying the troops... Kenneth Branagh in the title role in the recent film production of Henry V

New courses combining management theory with workshops on Henry V offer businessmen a perfect role model. Donald MacLeod reports



Richard Olivier: organising workshops at Globe Theatre

MANAGERS seeking to launch takeover battles, solve internal company wrangles or spur their marketing department to greater efforts are being encouraged to study the leadership qualities of Shakespeare's Henry V.

For 2500 managers can sign on for two days at the Theatre of Leadership to fulfil their potential with a mixture of Shakespeare and management theory - role play with a decent script for a change.

The actor's son Richard is organising the workshops for managers at the Globe Theatre in London which will use scenes from the play to explore the latest ideas about "new management" and leadership.

Mr Olivier, a theatre director who founded Wild Dance Events, and Mark Rylance, artistic director of the Globe,

are mounting the two-day course in March with the Office for Public Management.

The play could illustrate internal company struggles or takeover battles, said Mr Olivier, who hopes to mount similar workshops for lawyers using the Merchant of Venice.

"How much does a great leader have to be a great actor? The king has to know how much he can bluff and hide his fears to rally the troops, how to act the common man to get support. There seems to be a lot of acting involved."

"We are looking beyond the hero. A lot of the old male ways of dealing with authority are not working any more," said Mr Olivier.

The course, which will end with a performance of the play, starring Mr Rylance as the king, is not just for gentlemen in England now a-bed - women managers are welcome, as are foreigners, although one cannot imagine it attracting many French company executives.

Presumably, references to "rackets" and "companies unletter'd, rude and shallow" will be toned down.

"Henry V poses many of the dilemmas faced by the modern leader," say the organisers.

Managers require "strategic vision and courageous patience" and face the challenge of moving away from narrow, simplistic versions of leadership, where position in the hierarchy is enough to get the task done, to ones where leadership is devolved and shared throughout the organisation.

Participants will be asked to pick a short speech to use on the first day as a way of introducing themselves to the group. Twenty to 25 people are expected to take part.

The programme will start by exploring their thoughts about leadership before embarking with Mr Rylance and Mr Olivier on "an exploration of the theatre of leadership".

On the second day, managers will try to identify where their leadership potential has been blocked.

"In addition to the experiential approach of engagement with the play, we will also look at conceptual frameworks that may help to further your leadership potential," the organisers say.

Ian Gee, of the Office for Public Management, said many managers were looking for new and interesting ways of training, having completed their MBAs and Outward Bound courses. "I have built a bridge with the contents of my briefcase but I don't want to do it again," he said.

"Richard and Mark are interested in archetypal notions of leadership. The old version of leadership is power over people - now it is power with people. It is a shift that managers often have great difficulty with."

Enter marketing manager, stage right...

Henry V. Act III, scene 1. France, before Harfleur.

Once more unto the breach dear friends, once more; Or close the wall up with our English dead; In peace there's nothing so becomes a man As modest stillness and humility; But when the blast of war blows in our ears, Then imitate the action of the tiger; Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage; Then lend the eye a terrible aspect; Let it pry through the portage of the head Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it

As fearfully as doth a galled rock; O'erhang and jutty his confounded base, Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean. Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide; Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit To his full height. On, on, you noblest English. Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof - Fathers that like so many Alexanders Have in these parts from morn till even fought, And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument. Dishonour not your mothers; now attest That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.

Be copy now to men of groser blood; And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen. Whose limbs were made in England, show us here The mettle of your pasture; let us swear That you are worth your breeding - which I doubt not; For there is none of you so mean and base That hath not noble lustre in your eyes. I see you stand like greyhounds in the stipe, Straining upon the start. The game's afoot: Follow your spirit; and upon this charge Cry 'God for Harry, England and Saint George!'

Major considers mass showdown with party Eurosceptics

Public conference would seek to expose critics as minority

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN Major and his closest allies are considering staging a public showdown with their Eurosceptic critics in the Tory ranks by calling a conference of MPs, ministers, candidates and local party chairmen to thrash out their differences in the new year.

ahead with his latest plan for ending the Tory civil war, he would summon his troops to a one-day conference at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre - across the road from the Palace of Westminster - in the week of January 13 when Parliament returns.

Tory MPs, increasingly divided over Europe, would be invited along with selected candidates - who, according to surveys, are mostly right-wingers - and 600 or more

constituency chairmen, who wield considerable influence at local level.

"John Major would just sit there on a stool and let the sceptics have a go at him. The idea would be to show they were a tiny minority," one senior MP said yesterday.

Mr Major staged a question and answer session on a stool at the Tory conference last October, when a series of conciliatory speeches on both sides of the Cabinet, especially a bravura performance by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, briefly made it appear that the party could unite behind the Cabinet's "wait and

see" policy towards the single currency and its "partnership of nations" alternative to political integration.

But despite repeated efforts since to close down the issue before polling day, Mr Major faces a hard core of critics, egged on by the rightwing Tory press, who believe that a flag-waving, nationalist election campaign is the only way to save the Government.

In a previous leadership crisis - which led to the contest with John Redwood - Mr Major considered a showdown conference at the QEII centre, but drew back.

Mr Major's underlying

gloom was exposed on GMTV on Sunday when he described the controversy as one which "we haven't had in 150 years of politics" - a reference to the Corn Laws controversy of 1846 which split the Tory party over agricultural protectionism and kept it out of power for a generation.

Mr Major, who is to visit India, Bangladesh and Pakistan from January 8 to 12, has been warned that the crisis might necessitate cancelling what may be his last significant overseas visit as Prime Minister.

Yesterday, Mr Redwood appealed for party unity, a tac-

tic being deployed by other would-be leadership contenders on the Tory right even as they canvass for support. In any case, loyalists, still a majority in the Cabinet, believe that even if Mr Major conceded that Britain would not join a single currency in the 1997-2002 Parliament, or even in the "first wave" of entry in 1999, it would not satisfy their party opponents.

"If we were to give them what they want, they would ask for something else," one minister said this week.

The presence of the candidates and party chairmen at any showdown would have

special significance because of reports that at least 140 MPs and candidates - "far more than that", Eurosceptics claim - are preparing to declare their opposition to a single currency in their personal election manifestos.

The policy is unlikely to change while Mr Major, whose robust "wait and see" statements in public are offset by private waverings, stands firm with his deputy, Michael Heseltine, Mr Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary. But sceptics believe that the Tories' desperate position in the opinion polls gives them hope.

Crisis plan seeks to aid 4,000

James Motkin, Community Affairs Editor

UP TO 4,000 homeless people will be offered medical checks, clean sets of clothes and haircuts - as well as hot food, Christmas cheer and companionship - by a national network of day centres and services opened yesterday.

Doctors, dentists and hairdressers are among 2,000 volunteers expected to help staff 41 shelters run by the charity Crisis or with its help.

Music, sculpting, painting and other arts and crafts - as well as housing advice - are provided at some centres, while those queuing for the biggest, in Bermondsey, south London, which can accommodate 700 people, are being greeted by a unicycling juggler.

In London, there are mobile services, including health checks and food provided by the National Canine Defence League for street people's dogs, which are barred from the shelters, and there is a women's only shelter in Hackney, east London.

Thirty regional groups, from Aberdeen to Falmouth, Cornwall, and six London local authorities, are involved in the biggest programme run by Crisis, which also supports 34 winter and year-round night shelters.

A recent report for the charity said average life expectancy for those living rough on the streets in London was only 42, but the Crisis Christmas programme is aimed also at those sleeping in hostels, bed and breakfast hotels and squats.

Cathy Lee, the charity's winter services manager, said: "It is the worst time of the year to be homeless - the focus is on family, friends and home and many of the place homeless people use year round, such as day centres, cafes and libraries are closed."

"We aim to give homeless people a proper Christmas and offer vital services they are often denied. In past years, our medical staff have found people suffering from tuberculosis, pneumonia and hypothermia."

Visitors will be measured up for donated clothes, ranging from tiger-striped boxer shorts to smart suits. "We don't want to give rubbish out," said spokeswoman Fiona MacCallum.

"We want to give people back a sense of belonging. People don't want to be alone and miserable. The shelters are full of life, fun and people enjoying themselves."

"A lot of people who have been rehoused come because they want to be with people they know and care for."

This year, the Government is funding 12 winter night shelters with 459 bed spaces in central London, and a 36-place hostel in Bristol as part of a year-round programme to help tackle rough sleeping.

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Chris Sloan, the local community policeman on the Downham Estate: 'It is much quieter now'

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN SMITH

Dusk curfew tames young gangs

Tough policing has impact, reports Peter Hetherington

THE REGULAR attacks with flour, eggs, bottles and bricks, were bad enough. But when shopkeepers complained of gangs ransacking their premises, and old people were chased and threatened with knives in the afternoon, police decided that drastic action was needed on the Downham Estate in Catford, south London.

Case 1
Boy, 15. Remanded on August 12 for harassment, criminal damage and threatening a man. Bail conditions included 9pm-7am curfew. Arrested following month for breach of bail. Found guilty, ordered to pay £50, and given community service and supervision order.

Case 2
Boy, 13. Arrested on June 25, charged with £1,500 criminal damage and possession of knife. Given 7pm-7am curfew and geographical "exclusion order". Found guilty on October 31. Ordered to pay £10 compensation and given two-year supervision order.

Although children as young as eight were running riot, senior officers soon identified a small group of troublemakers, invariably in their early teens. "They were making life pretty miserable for the law-abiding majority," said Superintendent Neil Doak. "We were aware there was a

first area in the country to experiment with a co-ordinated curfew drive as part of tough bail conditions. As such, it is a role model for even tougher legislation being planned by Labour to extend curfews beyond bail.

Community Safety Orders, if residents show there is a demand. And Catford is the first step. "Contrary to what some of my colleagues say, it is a very socialist thing to do," insists the Lewisham East MP, Bridget Prentice, who was petitioned by people on the Downham Estate. Children from the age of eight had attacked residents. "Old people were chased and threatened with knives and chains in the afternoon, gardens uprooted, and wheelie bins set on fire — and shopkeepers had to contend with gangs intimidating customers, ransacking and stealing." Behind the counter of his ironmonger's store, a shopkeeper — who declined to be named for fear of "intimidation" — said his business was being destroyed by young gangs. "They throw things inside, then rampage through — everyone knows who they are, but they can't catch all of them."

Complaints during the last summer holidays when bus services were withdrawn after a spate of attacks. Police responded by patrolling in unmarked cars, using video cameras and what Supt Doak describes as a variety of other "sophisticated intelligence-gathering measures" to gain evidence against ringleaders. Youngsters were soon arrested. But rather than send them to informal juvenile panels, officers opted for youth courts and insisted that offenders should be subject to dusk-to-dawn curfews as a condition of bail. "We had to convince the Crown Prosecution Service it was a good idea. There was a reluctance because some of the charges appeared very minor. We were not bending the law —

we were applying it to the letter." Some locals believe they might now be experiencing the calm before another storm — for the bail curfew is only operational from arrest to final court appearance, which can be several months. But the local community policeman, PC Chris Sloan, believes the curfew drive sends out a powerful message. "Shopkeepers are telling me it is much quieter now, but then the 14 to 15-year-olds are getting more mobile and will move on. I just hope no one follows them."

EU move to lift fur ban challenged

Paul Brown Environment Correspondent

A JOINT attack has been launched by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, and Ken Collins, a senior Labour MEP, against attempts by the European Commission to lift a ban on the fur trade with north America and Russia. Leon Brittan, the European Union trade commissioner, has decided that a ban on leghold traps should be lifted because of a threat of trade sanctions from the United States. This goes against a decision by environment ministers earlier this month. They decided to ignore the threat and reinforce the ban which in effect means fur cannot be imported from countries which use these devices. Mr Gummer has protested to the commission, has said he will vote against any deal made by Mr Brittan and has appealed by letter to his 14 EU counterparts to remain firm. Mr Collins, who chairs the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, said yesterday in a letter to Jacques Santer, the commission's president, that he was sure the European Parliament would call the commission to account. "The European Parliament has indicated on many occasions that it will not be satisfied with anything less than a total ban on the import of such fur because it wants to see the end to the use of leghold traps," Mr Collins wrote. The traps are used in the US, Canada and Russia to capture wild animals such as beaver, mink, sable and fox. They frequently break animals' legs but do not kill them. Beavers caught by such

traps underwater drown, because they cannot reach the surface to breathe. The EU was due to ban the import of furs from the countries still using the traps from January 1, but the US said this was a breach of the rules on free trade, and threatened sanctions if Europe did not relent. Three weeks ago the 15 EU environment ministers decided the ban should stand. They told the commission to reopen negotiations with the three countries concerned and that, if it failed to reach a compromise on new rules on cruelty, they would impose the ban from March 31. The Environment Commissioner in Brussels, Ritt Bjerregaard, attempted to carry out the instructions but was overruled by Sir Leon, who was backed by other commission members. He decided protecting Europe's free trade with the US was more important than a ban on leghold traps. Mr Gummer said in his letter to the commission and fellow ministers: "I find it difficult to understand how the commission can justify acting in a way which is clearly not in accordance with the views expressed by the December council meeting." The commission had been given a mandate and must carry it out. If it failed to do so he would vote against any deal with the US and urge his colleagues to do likewise. Mr Gummer and Mr Collins have re-opened two difficult questions. The first is: who runs the EU, the politicians or the bureaucrats? The second: how far do free trade questions overrule environment and moral issues? Mr Gummer and Mr Collins clearly hope to win on both points.

Ten jailed for ringside riot

TEN men were jailed yesterday for a riot which blackened the name of British boxing. The men all admitted charges of violent disorder at the world championship bout between Britain's Nigel Benn and Spain's Juan Gomez at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, in September 1994, which was televised worldwide.

City and Manchester City football fans clashed. Mark Austin, 22, Peter Perryman, 31, Robert Paddock, 27 and Thomas Gaynor, 35, all from Birmingham, Philip Waring, 24, of Olton, West Midlands, Gary Williams, 34, of Marston Green and Terry Jones, 24, of Northfield were jailed for three months. Thomas Williams, 41, Malcolm Raddican, 28, and Paul Redshaw, 38, all from Manchester, were jailed for six months.

Unionists deny Goldsmith deal

Trimble insists parties' alliance limited to European parliament

THE Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, yesterday insisted his party's support for Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party in the European Parliament had no bearing on business at Westminster. The UUP's only European MP, Jim Nicholson, confirmed he was switching from the pro-EU European People's Party to the Europe of Nations grouping in the European Parliament headed by the billionaire financier. Mr Trimble said yesterday: "There is no linkage between us and the Referendum Party.

We will continue to vote in the same way as we do and have done in the House of Commons. We are not going to behave in a capricious or irresponsible manner in terms of voting... We will consider each matter very carefully in terms of its implications and we will be voting as Ulster Unionists." Unionists were not anti-Europe but were against the drive to make it an integrated nation state, he added. The recruitment of Mr Nicholson gives Sir James' Europe of Nations an unexpected boost to regain its status and funding at the European Parliament. The group lost official recognition last month when its numbers

fell to 17 after a French MEP, Anne Christine Poisson, defected. To qualify for group status in the parliament — and consequently extra funding for facilities and assistants — a party needs 18 members if support is drawn from three states. Leaders of other groups claimed Sir James — an infrequent attendee at the parliament — had been anxious for an alliance. Sir James' group last month denied claims by supporters of the Austrian extreme rightwinger, Jorge Haider, that it had negotiated with them about an alliance. Pauline Green, leader of the majority Socialist group in the parliament, yesterday claimed that Europe of Nations supporters had been so desperate that they had even canvassed a tactical alliance with her group. Mrs Green said: "They have

been trawling around desperately for months, doing their utmost to poach, beg or borrow anyone they could get. It has been laughable to watch. "They even had the brass neck to offer me a deal under which they would support us on social and environmental legislation. In return they wanted our support for them moving towards the centre of the chamber and away from the fascists. I sent them packing." Sir James agreed yesterday with Mr Trimble that there were no strings attached to their new relationship. "They do exactly what they like, but we're working in the same general cause." However, when asked whether the UUP link would apply to Westminster, he replied: "We would co-operate because we are both seeking the same thing."

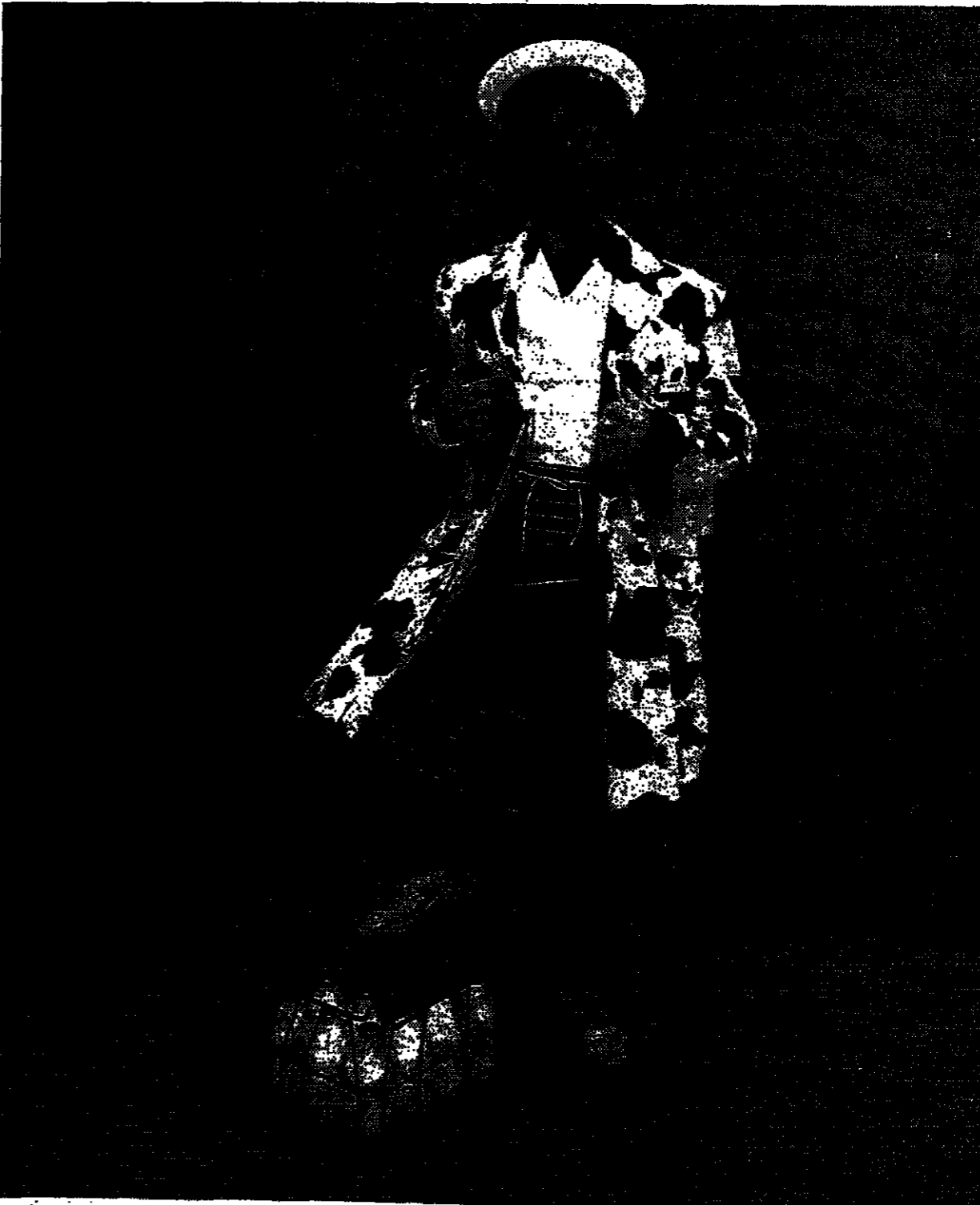
Fears grow for safety of 'streetwise' girl missing five days

FEARS grew yesterday for the safety of a girl aged nine — described by police as streetwise — who has been missing from her home in Chester for five days. Kayleigh Ward disappeared after being given £2 by a neighbour to buy chips from a Chinese chip shop 300 yards from her home on Thursday evening. Her mother, Yvonne, did not raise the alarm until the

following night when she realised that Kayleigh had not gone to stay at her aunt's. Kayleigh, who frequently played truant from school, and was known to talk to vagrants in the city centre, was nicknamed "Oddbod" and "Oddie". "The fact that she is streetwise, in my view, can be as dangerous as helpful," said Detective Superintendent David Jones, who is leading the search. "Sadly, there are people about who wish to take ad-

vantage of vulnerable young girls. I am personally hopeful that we are going to find her, but as time goes on my concern is increasing." The police hunt has focused on the Blacon area, where Kayleigh and her family lived until October when they moved to temporary accommodation elsewhere in the city. Over 70 officers, including dog-handlers, are involved and divers have searched a local canal. Detectives said yesterday that a 12-year-old local boy

had seen Kayleigh on a bus on Friday afternoon; she had said she was going into Chester to "hang around the town centre". Mr Jones urged Chester residents to search their gardens, sheds, garages and outbuildings, and any vehicles which had not been used for a number of days, in case Kayleigh had decided to sleep rough. Kayleigh, who has two older sisters, had gone missing before but never overnight and would usually go to stay with her aunt, he said.



The Selfridges Sale starts early. LONDON'S FIRST BIG SALE. STARTS FRIDAY 27th DECEMBER 9am.

So you're not Santa, Father?
"Santa! That ludicrous, emasculated, overlaid powder-puff confection of Catholic mumbo-jumbo, Protestant puritanism and Western capitalism? Ho! I piss, belch and fart on Santa!"
Father Christmas on the psychiatrist's couch
G2 cover story

صوتنا من الامم

صباحنا من الامل

Village pays price for summer hatred

David Sharrock visits predominantly Catholic Pomeroy, where there will be no Protestant children's carol walks and the few Protestant traders are being forced out by a nationalist boycott

THE reedy, untuned voices of children singing Christmas carols is a tradition of the season and enough to move the hardest heart, but in a village in the mid-Ulster county of Tyrone...

back. They have not been back since July, when the Rainey family were the victims of a nationalist boycott of Protestant businesses...

"I would like to say that in 20 years the schoolchildren here will be living peacefully and in harmony with each other, but sadly we might find that things are actually worse in 20 years..."

There were also those who support Sinn Fein and it suits their political agenda. But he believes republican elements have now come in and organised and orchestrated the boycott.

News in brief

Customs stoppage today at Gatwick

CUSTOMS officers at Gatwick airport are holding a 24-hour strike today. More than 80 officers are staffing the green "nothing to declare" Customs channels...

Nurses held in Saudi jail

TWO British nurses are preparing to spend Christmas in a Saudi Arabian jail after Foreign Office pressure yesterday failed to secure their release.

Pay rise for authors

AUTHORS are to get a 35 per cent pay rise from public libraries. Public Lending Right rates will increase from 2p per book borrowed to 2.7p from January 13 for writers in the scheme.

Shake-up at Radio 1

RADIO 1 is changing its daytime presenters. Mark Goodier loses the weekday drivetime show to Mark Radcliffe and Marc Riley, who currently present the 10pm-midnight slot.

D Shamoon and H Alwan

A REPORT of the trial of tax inspector Michael Alcock, based on Freemas Association copy, published on November 7, suggested incorrectly that co-defendants David Shamoon and Hisham Alwan faced 17 counts of corruption...



Cara Weatherstone... stepped on copper pipe to flick switch

Girl electrocuted as she switches on tree lights

SAFETY warnings were issued yesterday after a girl aged six was killed in front of her family as she switched on the fairy lights of a Christmas tree.

Extremely cold comfort for the Buddhist who went up a hill and caused a mountain of trouble

David Ward... Their Christmas bash at Beddgelert, a village in the shadow of Snowdon. The Buddhist had set his sights on the middle path to the summit of Cadair Idris (2,927ft).

The helicopter swept over the mountain, its floodlight piercing the darkness, but found no one. It lifted two four-man teams on to the slopes and soon one team stumbled on their quarry.

Entertainments & Travel

A large grid of advertisements for various theatres and entertainment venues in London. Each ad lists the name of the production, the theatre, and contact information. Examples include 'TOWER Theatre', 'MAGGIE SMITH', 'THE CHERRY ORCHARD', 'THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA', 'JANET OWEN', 'A DOLL'S HOUSE', 'THE WITCHES', 'THE REDUCED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY', 'AN IDEAL HUSBAND', 'JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR', 'LES MISERABLES', 'SMOKEY JOE'S CAFE', 'GENE WILDER', 'AGATHA CHRISTIE'S THE MOUSETRAP', 'BLOOD BROTHERS', 'SWAN LAKE', 'THE NUTCRACKER', 'THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA', 'THE WITCHES', 'THE REDUCED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY', 'AN IDEAL HUSBAND', 'JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR', 'LES MISERABLES', 'SMOKEY JOE'S CAFE', 'GENE WILDER', 'AGATHA CHRISTIE'S THE MOUSETRAP', 'BLOOD BROTHERS', 'SWAN LAKE', 'THE NUTCRACKER'.

To advertise in Entertainments Telephone 0171 611 8100 or 0161 834 8886

New in brief

Deng 'too ill' to go to Hong Kong handover

IN HIS present state of health, it would be hard for China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to visit Hong Kong for the colony's return to Chinese rule next July...

Mass killer stripped of fortune

A COURT in Australia stripped the Port Arthur mass murderer Martin Bryant of a fortune worth more than A\$1 million (\$480,000) yesterday...

Presidents 'got off too lightly'

SOUTH KOREA'S 'trial of the century' headed to the Supreme Court yesterday after prosecutors challenged sentences against former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-woo as too lenient...

Dutch say no to drugs summit

THE Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, welcomes a call by his Belgian counterpart, Jean-Luc Dehaene, for a drugs 'mini-summit' but is not yet ready to commit the Netherlands to such a meeting...

Weizman apologises to gays

THE ISRAELI president, Ezer Weizman, met gay and lesbian leaders yesterday and apologised for publicly denigrating homosexuality as 'abnormal'.

Algiers car bomb kills three

A CAR bomb exploded near a crowded cafe in central Algiers yesterday killing at least three people and wounding 70, up to 30 seriously, Algerian hospital sources said.



A group of retired Carmelite nuns work out in an old people's home in Torremolinos, Spain. The nuns, once missionaries, like to keep fit. PHOTOGRAPH: JESUS DOMINGUEZ

Peace accord in Tajikistan

THE warring sides in Tajikistan's four-year civil war yesterday signed two peace accords, Interfax news agency said.

Hospital fire kills nine

NINE elderly German women were killed in a fire that destroyed a dormitory in a psychiatric hospital in the small northern town of Rickling, police said yesterday.

The chilling existential payoff is that no one knows George — he never existed. Yeah, sure — a soft, fluffy Christmas movie... It's A Wonderful Life?

G2 page 6

Cold welcome at the Kremlin

Yeltsin makes shaky start

David Hearst in Moscow

BORIS Yeltsin returned to his Kremlin office for the first time in six months yesterday, declaring himself fully recovered from his recent heart surgery and ready for the political battle ahead...

David Hearst in Moscow

had during his television address last Friday. The return of a sick tsar to restore order in the Kremlin was common enough in the time of Ivan the Terrible...

David Hearst in Moscow

Russia was ready for "deeper co-operation in economic and commercial spheres". The president was also courted by the East. The Chinese prime minister Li Peng will visit Moscow this week...

David Hearst in Moscow

Lebed, the younger brother of Alexander, won the first round run-off in Khakassia region in eastern Siberia. The Kremlin claims that numerically it is winning the elections...

David Hearst in Moscow

nady Zyuganov claimed that his alliance of Communists and nationalists in the Union of National and Patriotic Forces was close to winning control of the upper house...



An Ostrovski hunter waits for a tow as his countrymen hope their new governor will lead them from poverty and corruption. PHOTOGRAPH: GLEB KOSOV/NOV

Grumpy bear awakes to jolt complacent leaders

David Hearst reports from the freezing and lawless forests of Ostrovski on a surprising election result that will worry Moscow

IN ONLY two circumstances will the milk-manned bear of the sleepy, frozen forests of northern Russia turn into 600lbs of fur, claw and jaw all concentrated on ripping your throat apart...

with potatoes and he just about lives off that.

The wood yards have closed, the three factories where they process cardboard from wood pulp have closed. That leaves the large prison at the other end of Ostrovski as the only other regional employer.

If this compromise were forged, the ailing Yeltsin would be swept away

tremely expensive, and what you cannot eat, you certainly can't resist because no one has the money to pay for it. Ninety per cent of the money is in Moscow.

years ago. He said: "In this country there is no control over the executive. These people are showing the absence of control in the most cynical and bold way. They say 'We will do as we want' and this goes from the top downwards."

Back in the forests the regional gamekeeper is preparing for a licensed hunt of an elk. Pavel Vyselyov has 150 bears and 900 elks in his 'patch', an area the size of a small country - 1,300 square miles. Shooting of wild bear has been prohibited for the

past two years, but the woods once protected by the Soviet military state - Kostroma was a closed area to foreigners - is now alive with poachers.

France goes cold turkey on turkey

Alex Duval Smith

WITH so much rich and expensive food available, Parisians do not see why they should give pride of place to a watery-necked bird whose flesh goes dry in the oven. And that also goes for the cantons feeding the poor and the homeless.

cheese or yogurt, and a dessert. If we can add a little extra treat, we will," said Mr Suis, a retired businessman shouting orders to 30 volunteers in an abandoned warehouse.

Bûche de Noël aux marrons

For eight people. 125g dark chocolate, 125g unsalted butter, softened with a fork, 500g chestnut purée, 125g icing sugar, aluminium foil.

and to get the real luxury food between Christmas and New Year when families realise they cannot eat any more of it themselves.

Bûche de Noël aux marrons

half the icing sugar. Mix until smooth, adding a little rum if desired. Spoon mixture on to a piece of aluminium foil, folded double. Shape into a loaf and roll in foil. Leave in fridge for 24 hours or freezer for 2hrs.

ing to spend much more of the money donated by individuals on basic foodstuffs. "But it is Christmas for the poor as well, and they deserve a little extra something to cheer them up."

Bûche de Noël aux marrons

For most French people, Christmas is as much of a binge as it is for Britons. Turkey sales are down by 10 per cent this year.

Police raid satanic sect in Belgian paedophile case

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Belgian police's lengthy search for evidence in the country's paedophile scandal took a shocking turn yesterday with confirmation that they had removed human skulls from the premises of satanic sects.

troux owned in the area. Two of the bodies were of eight-year-old girls, missing from their homes for more than a year, who starved to death while held in a cell in the basement of one of Dutroux's homes.

The parliamentary inquiry into the child abductions has exposed staggering inter-faction rivalries which meant that leads pointing to Dutroux were either never passed on or not followed up.

As part of their search for evidence to convict Dutroux and his associates, police have spent the past week digging through disused and gloomed mine shafts near the Charleroi suburb of Jumet, so far without finding any evidence that they ever incarcerated anyone here.

Chai Bhut, Speed Taliban, Suzanne Gold, Victory

Cracks appear in Pakistan corruption commission Charges against Bhutto fail to stick

Suzanne Goldenberg
in Islamabad

PAKISTAN'S caretaker government has all but admitted failure in its attempt to punish members of the country's elite who have been accused of siphoning off huge sums during the government of the sacked prime minister, Benazir Bhutto.

The remaining loyalists within Ms Bhutto's divided Pakistan People's Party (PPP) accuse the caretaker administration of using corruption to try to rig the elections. "This is just one-sided. Nearly 80 days have passed and they haven't brought any charges against us. It's political victimisation," said Naheed Khan, Ms Bhutto's private secretary, who was hauled on charges of misuse of public funds after spending more than a month in jail.

However, Shafiqat Mahmood, who broke with Ms Bhutto to join the caretaker cabinet, said the whole notion of a comprehensive clean-up in such a short time span was misconceived. "I think the expectations were unfairly raised and we couldn't live up to them. The legal procedures are such that to expect anything dramatic to happen in 80 days is too much. I don't see any top-ranking politicians being eliminated before the elections."

Speed of success leaves Taliban in confusion

Suzanne Goldenberg reports on the doubts enveloping the new rulers in Kabul, where terror is the only certainty

MOHAMMED Rasool has been consumed by war. His left shin has been replaced by a plastic shield and his withered right arm hangs useless by his side. But he is still a soldier and has a new master who will take the city as a bit different from the people in the ministries. These people in the ministries are not in control, said an international aid organisation employee in Kabul.

By ruling through terror, the argument goes, the Taliban hope to restore cohesion to a movement which has been infiltrated, and perhaps tainted, by the fighters of conquered mujahedin groups.

mentalists or moderates. We are all the same from top to bottom." Ms Newberg believes the confusion about the Taliban's intent springs from the speed of their victory.

Victory, before the vote

Ramihan Hussain
in Singapore

THE People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled Singapore since 1959, swept back to power yesterday before a single vote was cast.

then in 20, 30 years' time, the whole of Singapore will be bustling away and your estate, through your own choice, will be left behind. They're leaving slums. That's my message."

Analysts said the most keenly watched aspect of the elections would be the percentage of the vote won by the PAP, and whether its decision to field new candidates in a third of the seats would reverse the decline in its mandate from 75.5 per cent in 1990 to 62.3 per cent in 1991.



Singobile Mabheha receives the staff of authority from Zimbabwe's minister of local government, John Nkomo, as she succeeds her father as chief of the Nswazi people (above); and young Ndebele warriors (below) dance in celebration

The chief who wears a miniskirt

Andrew Meldrum reports from Matandele in southern Zimbabwe where after much debate the Nswazi people have broken traditional culture and appointed a student teacher as their first female tribal leader

Andrew Meldrum reports from Matandele in southern Zimbabwe where after much debate the Nswazi people have broken traditional culture and appointed a student teacher as their first female tribal leader



skirts, high heels and has a boyfriend, who is a school teacher. At weekends she goes back to her family's rural home where she meets in council with the Mabheha clan's elders.

Burundi rebels call ceasefire

Chris McGreal
in Johannesburg

HUTU rebels in Burundi have called a Christmas ceasefire in the civil war as the Tutsi-led military government denied accusations that its army is responsible for further massacres of civilians.

Reports of another massacre emerged on Sunday. Residents of Burundi accused the army of murdering 250 civilians with guns and bayonets during fighting against rebels last month.

Aborigines win right to claim farming land

Alan Thornhill in Canberra

ABORIGINES won an important legal victory yesterday, paving the way for "traditional ownership" claims on a possible 40 per cent of the continent.

The ruling had left a confused and chaotic regime that will see native title applications determined on almost all pastoral leases. But Aborigines rejected such claims as scaremongering.

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Diary

Matthew Norman

At Christmas, more even than the rest of the year, my bow-tied old friend Lord Wyatt of Westford lights up the London party scene like a star going supernova. Last week, Woody gave the Norman Lamont bash in Nottingham Hill with such meriment that the party barely survived his early departure. It did, however, and when about an hour later the phone rang, Woody's voice was heard leaving a message. "This is Lord Wyatt calling," he announced. "Strive to be at once. I repeat, the party must cease at once. I have lost my cigar. Stop the party, and form a search party. This is a matter of the utmost importance. My cigar must be found." Although close students of Woody's oeuvre will sense an echo from the time Mr Saucy Squirrel lost his winter nuts, no one took a blind bit of notice. The party was in full swing half an hour later when the phone rang again. "This is Wyatt," said a familiar voice coming from the machine. "The party may begin again. Tell the search party to stand down. I have found my cigar. I was sitting on it."

An invitation to a one-day conference about the "accountability of agencies" (to be held central London on January 28) sounds most tempting. Baroness Symons, formerly head of the union for top civil servants, as well as Labour's Giles Radice and the constitutional expert Vernon Bogdanor. If none of that grabs you, there is always the 35-minute talk, beginning at 2pm, entitled "The problem of accountability." The speaker should know all about that. He is David Willetts.

FROM Millbank come mixed signals on the industrial front. Oofy Wegg-Frosser, leader of the P G Woodhouse wing, denies that he is on strike... and promptly fails to call back with a rebuttal of any kind, rapid or tardy. We asked Oofy to ask his boss, Mandy Mandelson MP, whether we might borrow his new chauffeur-driven Rover - the one supplied to him free of charge by nightclub owner James Palmbo - over Christmas. Oofy promised to call back quickly, but never did so... and so we assume that his wildest strike counter-measure, as for the car, we will be returning to this in the New Year, with an exciting, brand-new "spot the Mandymobile" big prize competition.

THERE is news, meanwhile, of the man Oofy replaced, Dolly Draper. New Labour's very own Arthur Daley is writing a novel of Westminster intrigue, *The Queen's Beasts*. ("No, it is not a homophobic reference," says Dolly, "but an historical one.") It is coming on so well that the *Sunday Times* reports "strong interest" from publishers. In order to avoid disappointment, we have opened negotiations over serialisation rights. "Since you plagiarised my book early, you are in a strong position," says Dolly, "and I'd be delighted to continue my happy and productive association with the *Guardian Diary*." We cannot wait.

None of the most important parliamentary questions since Harry Greenwood called for a legal definition of the horse, the Tory back-bencher Cranley Onslow had asked the Health Secretary. "What investigations his Department is making into the incidence of latex allergy?" Junior minister John Horam directs him to a bulletin to do with sensitisation to latex gloves in the Commons library (top shelf, we trust). What the hell is going on?

IF Michael Howard needs something for his happy competitors do when morning exercise at Pontina is over, we refer him to Lieutenant Colonel Romeo Maganta, a police commander in Manila. Mr Maganta, who pays £3 for every 1,000 dead flies handed in, has now formed a committee of prisoners to count each batch, in order to make sure "that the city isn't being swindled".



CHRISTMAS OR LIFE-IT'S MUCH THE SAME TUNE

Forget politics, the real life is in art

Commentary

Hugo Young

BEING a political journalist has many pleasures, but carries a serious deprivation. There are no heroes in my life and work. Politics in the modern era doesn't create the characters that make for heroism, nor characters one would bet on showing it called upon to do so. Looking back on 1996, I can't think of a single man or woman to celebrate, and find none. All is civil, compromise and feet of clay.

I have been lost in admiration a few times in 1996, but never once for a feat of politics. Yearning to indulge just occasionally in the journalism of greatness, sometimes I wish I were Michael Billington or Richard Williams.

The experiences that live with me have nothing to do with my profession. Feeling the need for something that really mattered, I never found it there. There's a whole vast interlocking industry of government and media that feeds off politics, and I am part of it, filling all these columns, serving the rage and some-

times the vanity of other players in the game. But what, at the end of the year, is left? The dress argument, the sediment of Euro-rage, the multiple manipulation of truth, the impotence of power. The salient positive change of 1996, which is the solid improvement in Britain's competitive economic position, would appear to owe no more than filler-touching to politicians, and to have made no impact on the people it should impress as the most heroic achievement of the political class. The year ends as it began: with a government the people despise, running a country whose destiny it no longer decides.

Chronicling brilliance is therefore a delight denied to people in my line of business. Mention Robin Cook and the Scott Report, and you've just about exhausted the heroic moments. The nature of the politician's trade these days is the organising of minor triumphs and the avoiding of major calamities.

To satisfy my thirst for greatness, I look elsewhere. Ian McKellen's *Richard III* will live in the memory long after the vacuous pretensions of John Redwood, scheming his way into the dust-bin of history, have been exposed for what they are. It is, to me, the finest film ever made of a Shakespeare play, partly because it does not film the play but makes out of it a totally cinematic drama for modern

times. Has there been a more mesmerizing up-close map of conspiratorial intent than McKellen's subtle plying visage? I doubt it.

As a journey through modern British attitudes to class, race, deprivation, prosperity, relationship, how infinitely more durable is Mike Leigh's wonderful film, *Secrets And Lies*, than all the prating lectures of every politician in the House of Commons, so many of whom have been lining up this year to address themselves to the moral condition of Britain. This film has won many prizes. It endures in the heart and the head, transcends its own quotidian details, opens up the wondrous experience of unconditional satisfaction.

So did Harrison Birtwhistle's *The Mask Of Orpheus*, an extraordinary, one-off rendition of which was put on at the Festival Hall in April. Here was a rebuke, among other things, to the market economics of the age: an undeviating modernist piece, a four-hour meditation on heroism and myth, for which every seat was taken. I sat just behind the composer, who was hunched next to the electronic controls that interplayed with two conductors, and felt myself to be in the presence of a creative genius, transported into other worlds.

The same thing happened with Paul Schofield, playing John Gabriel Borkman in *Perfume*, a small Bengali batsman seeing the ball so early in his first Test Match that he

made England's fastest bowlers look like donkey-droppers. It is, of course, asking too much that politics should produce effects analogous with these. In politics, an acknowledgment of greatness is available only yoked to allegiance. There are people who think Tony Blair is already a great man, and he has certainly done some big things to his party.

But flawless admiration comes only from the followers. A journalist could never allow himself to indulge in such a feeling for any politician. The signal instance of what happens when that professional rule is forgotten is to be found in the fate of both journalism and politics when unconditional love was poured on Margaret Thatcher. Both professions were corrupted. Just as neither film nor a theatre critic is likely to find such simple perfection as I sometimes do in the worlds they have to follow.

All the same, this year I've envied them. In politics, it has been a year of bound and fury signifying very little. Every week we have heard an extremity of ranting and threatening, of panic followed by nullity and then more panic. Labour's unapproved promise and the Government's withered strength.

Beside these mastodons, culture has continued to scale the heights, untouched by their prosings about a world they have never time nor interest to engage with. Harrison Birtwhistle's triumph leaves Virginia Bottomley vapourising in an empty hall. Jack Jones at the New York Museum of Modern Art, Halink's Ring, Schiff at the Wigmore Hall. Each drove home the banality, and yet the high presumption, of the material I write about.

So did Ganguly's century at Lord's, a small Bengali batsman seeing the ball so early in his first Test Match that he

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Why are we so scared of the full picture?



Rachel Cusk

IF Christmas were a film, it would be by Walt Disney. Easter, on the other hand, would be vintage David Cronenberg and the *Dusty Mail* (currently in pursuit of the censor who will not ban his film *Crash*) would be after Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for distribution.

What these mythologies of birth and death have in common is that we find them satisfying enough to permit yearly screenings, while the modern purveyors of similar realities find their production lines halted by censure.

The truth of the "greatest story" is perhaps thought to have been neutered and rendered harmless by repetition. Its detail is encouraging enough to resemble reality, while elastic enough to appear mutable; so much so that the *Mail* on Sunday can describe for us "how the Nativity might go wrong today", bending the tale to promulgate contempt for the bureaucratic, but in fact profoundly Christian, compassion of modern British society.

It is curious, then, that we should find ourselves so afraid of these great changes without their cosy carcasses of interpretation; or rather that interpretation should be deployed as a kind of inverted armour, protecting us from the underlying reality.

are to be filmed at their death, perhaps conceals a wider, more visceral and less easily articulated sense of wrong which extends far beyond the moral minority. The problems here are not groomed for debate like so many others pertaining to reportage.

The presence of the camera-man or photographer is not questioned for its agency, as it can be, albeit foolishly, in a situation of remediable human suffering. Nor is there the resilient steeliness of the aesthetic sense which can make war photography so chilling. And yet, more than either of these examples, the notion of filming slow and certain death provokes the question *why*.

Why do you need to do it? What the point? What separates it from the clearly comprehensible public request in America for filmed state executions? Or the clearly pervasive desire to watch real death as entertainment, simulations of it no longer being satisfying? If television won't observe the laws of decency as it goes about its revelations, then what stands between us and the public executioners, if we're capable of it? Who is going to protect us from ourselves?

Of course, we accuse television of inventing, or at least disseminating, evil when it suits us. People have always wanted to watch public executions; they have always killed for pleasure. Those who didn't want to presumably didn't, just as those with no interest in the *Human Body* series can always switch it off. In neither case does doing so obviate the event, merely that in the latter our sense of violation is extant.

WE can protect ourselves from this sense elsewhere in our culture by discrediting works of art that are too ever realistic; but if we insist on accusing this culture of telling lies, of offering unreliable representations, then where else is truth to be publicly advocated but on television? This is not truth in search of justice. It is merely a record, different in form but in spirit identical (and in many ways superior) to those which have always been kept.

It should come as no surprise that objectivity lies under attack at the apogee of relativism, that reality seems painful to our increasingly addled and unrealistic senses. For some, the Christian story may serve to administer the lessons of life and death, of good and evil. For others, the footage of Nazi concentration camps, of famines in Africa, of violence in Rwanda or Bosnia, achieves at least part of that purpose.

What it doesn't do is provide a happy ending by asserting the value of virtue, the importance of kindness, compassion and faith. But perhaps it's about time we started doing that for ourselves.

A long-delayed government report on energy says that half the homes in Britain aren't warm enough in cold weather. And one in five can't ever be made warm enough. George Monbiot reveals the chilling truths behind the report's figures



Bleak house

IT'S hard somehow to believe the advertisements which appear every Christmas, as regularly as the fairy lights, asking for money to help pensioners faced with the terrible choice of eating or heating.

Not only does the timing rouse suspicions of a cynical appeal to seasonal goodwill but, in the midst of our plenty, the words and images seem to come from another age. Can people, in this superheated nation, really have been left so far out in the cold? But ask any doctor and you'll discover that, far from exaggerating, the appeals only hint at the size of the problem.

Whenever a cold snap like the one we're in forecast, hospitals clear their wards in anticipation of the rush. When temperatures in Scotland fell to -18C over Christmas last year, there was a massive rise in admissions.

Every year in Britain, around 30,000 more people die in the winter than die during the summer. Most of the victims are either elderly or very young. Low temperatures make the blood thicken, increasing the chances of a heart attack. Coughs and colds can turn into pneumonia.

But these, in truth, are just symptoms; the underlying cause of death is an even more noxious disease: a seasoned and ingenious government filibuster. Though some researchers still blame long queues at the bus stop for the chills, the balance of evidence suggests that the main problem is cold homes. It is not so much that people cannot afford to heat them (though many cannot); it is that millions of people cannot afford to keep the precious warmth from pouring straight through the roof or the window.

There has never been

much doubt that British homes are poorly insulated but, until last month, no one could have guessed just how desperate the situation is. On November 28 - a mere five years after it was completed - the Department of the Environment published the Energy Report from its 1991 House Condition Survey.

There is little mystery about why it was suppressed until two days after the 1996 Budget. It is 400 pages long, meticulous and comprehensive, and the report's conclusions are chilling. When outside temperatures fall to a relatively cosy three degrees above freezing, 50 per cent of all households can no longer maintain minimum acceptable heating standards.

Only 5 per cent of English homes are energy-efficient, and one in five homes is beyond salvation. Pensioners' homes are in the worst state of all: the elderly pay

and the feeble targets set for reduction of industrial pollution, domestic energy consumption is still responsible for 30 per cent of our carbon dioxide emissions. At the most immediate level, poor insulation leading to burst domestic water mains and radiators cost Scottish local authorities £250 million after last year's freeze.

The Government seems to accept that the market can't deal with this problem. It spends £72 million a year on insulation grants for households with less accessible benefits, which should get us back on track in just over 1,000 years. Until this year, the so-called "fossil fuel levy", extracting an annual £1 billion from consumers, provided the best chance we have had of sorting this mess out, but the Government decided it would be better spent on propping up the nuclear industry.

Now that this is no longer a national priority, most of the money has been given back to consumers as a £50 rebate. This is not, perhaps, the most progressive or lasting way in which to redistribute a nation's assets. (Perhaps VAT on fuel, stingy and punitive as it is, could still be turned to good account.)

placed to fine the nation's lofts than the energy regulators. James McKinnon, the last gas regulator, insisted that British Gas invest directly in energy-efficiency measures, principally because of his concern about the depletion of North Sea reserves.

Clare Spottiswood, his successor, sagely decided not to encumber free enterprise with such impediments. The electricity regulator still wants £10 million to be spent over four years, but most domestic heating systems are now fired by gas.

Instead, however, regulators and ministers do not so much lag behind the problem of home insulation as ensure that we hardly do any lagging at all. In April, the Housing Minister, David Curry, was asked when the energy report would be published. He promised it would be coming out in the summer. It is not hard to see why the promise was broken. Despite pledges to provide for those in greatest need, the Government has been cutting the housing maintenance money it gives local authorities since 1991. The year the energy report was collated, On November 26 this year, it deprived them of a further £250 million.

The Department of the Environment must have been pleased to see that its careful holding back of the report's release, received no publicity whatsoever. I know that John Gummer's Christian devotions seem to have little to do with the policies his department pursues, but this surely endgame is surely one of his most diabolical devices. Better than anyone else, he knows that millions of British homes are hardly fit for asses, let alone babes in the manger or venerable wise men.

For the old, the very young and the vulnerable this Christmas, the best of all wishes could be government department that responded to its own reports.

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Ivor Roberts-Jones

In a figurative landscape

THE SCULPTOR Ivor Roberts-Jones, who has died aged 83, will be plagued beyond the grave by irony. He will be remembered by a wide public for one work, his statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, but it was not his finest achievement.

It was the same during his lifetime. Not only was he out of step with what was fashionable, but he was frequently commissioned to execute works that did not show him at his best. The point is that he was better at the intimate. His forte was the exploration of character and the subtle manipulation of his materials. Yet he was in demand for monumental things, for portraits of "the great and the good." There were, for example, two other Churchills, in Oslo (1975) and in New Orleans (1977), an Attlee (1978) in the House of Commons and the Augustus John Memorial at Folkestone, and likenesses of the Duke of Edinburgh, Somerset Maugham, Yehudi Menuhin, Rupert Brooke and many others.

Actually, Roberts-Jones was more at home teaching, for his own preoccupation with technique made him sensitive to generations of students. He began to teach sculpture at Goldsmiths College in 1946, and in 1964 became its director. He once sadly observed: "I think that the more inventive side of my work has been siphoned off into my teaching."

Another problem dogged his life and will affect his reputation. He was out of step with what was fashionable and the award-winning sculpture that he produced in the 1960s and 1970s was just as alien to him as were Carl Andre's bricks and the performance art and installations of more recent years.

Roberts-Jones was awarded a CBE, he was an RA, and won various artistic awards including, in 1974, the Gold

Medal of the Royal Society of British Sculptors; he had major exhibitions, such as the one given him in Cardiff by the Welsh Arts Council in 1976; yet he remained outside the mainstream of what was fashionable.

Nowhere was this clearer than when he was included in the exhibition held in Battersea Park in celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. In the company of Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Anthony Caro, Lynn Chadwick, Paolozzi and many younger sculptors producing abstract work, his contribution looked firmly based on the homocentric traditions which, until the 20th century, had been at the heart of sculpture.

Roberts-Jones was born in Oswestry, Salop, trained at Goldsmiths College and the Royal Academy schools, and during the second world war fought in India and Burma. He was a deeply thoughtful man, and the controversy sometimes acrimonious, often silly, which raged about the Parliament Square statue of Churchill was antipathetic to him. He disliked the publicity. He was at his best when solving the abiding problems faced by the sculptor concerned with the human figure and head.

He was clear about what he wanted to do. He said: "All things vividly seen are, as I believe, abstractions, and starting work is the beginning of a move back to reality." At one time he made many studies of blind men, who he felt were "seeing the immediate space around them into themselves, as though breathing it in through their white sticks as they tapped out their private geography." He said that the sculpture he liked best had the same quality.

When Ivor Roberts-Jones gains the reputation he deserves, the contradictions in his life and work will be

logically, stage by stage, understood. He was a meticulous man, whose work was established, Bobby would often start with what interested him most; usually, but not always, the head. The intimate portrait head was, arguably, always the focal point and major strength of both his sculpture and drawing.

He believed that one should always draw an idea. Accuracy was not essential to good drawing, one often needed to exaggerate. All great drawings, he felt, contained an element of caricature — it was better to make a large

than even larger than to underestimate it. Above all what interested him was character. During the war he wrote poetry of some distinction, and his lyric gift is also very apparent in his sculpture; the portraits in particular are rich in poetic metaphor and allusion. A sister would often remind him of some animal, bird, or even a flower or plant, and he would speak, for instance, of someone's head as being a cross between an egg and a young bullcalf.

To watch him at work on a portrait head or a drawing was a privilege, and gave one



Ivor Roberts-Jones works on his figure of Augustus John in 1967. PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC WADSWORTH

an understanding that the better teachers can only show you how they see things themselves. He mostly drew very quickly, and often quoted approvingly Hokusei's remark that you could not claim to draw unless you could draw two cranes standing in the water; one is just standing, the other is about to fly off. Hokusei once referred to himself as "the old man mad about drawing." The same could be said about Ivor Roberts-Jones.

Ivor Roberts-Jones, sculptor, born November 2, 1913; died December 9, 1996

Francesco Siciliani

The launching of Callas

FRANCESCO Siciliani, who has died aged 85, was a key figure in postwar Italy's revival of opera, and developed the early careers of two leading divas, Maria Callas and Renata Tebaldi. He led major Italian opera houses and was artistic director of Milan La Scala from 1957-63 and again from 1980-83.

He gained fame as a great impresario but trained as a musician — he was a musical prodigy, who played the piano in public at six. It was said that he learned to read notes before words. Born in Perugia, the son of a clarinet teacher, he studied music at the Florence Music Conservatory in addition to gaining degrees in law and political science, skills that were to be of inestimable help when he came to order the Byzantine world of Italian opera. He gained a reputation during the 1930s as a composer, but he decided on a career as an administrator.

His first post was as artistic director at the San Carlo in Naples, from 1940-48; then he graduated to the same position at the Teatro Comunale in Florence before moving his career to La Scala in 1957. He was director of the ill-fated La Fenice in Venice at the time of his death.

He created the international festival Sagra Musicale Ligure in Genoa in 1947, and from 1950 he was president of the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome, where he lived in the latter part of his life. He was also music consultant for Italian state broadcasting.

Siciliani was a discerning judge of exceptional talent. He was a marked influence on Callas's career. He first heard her, and was astonished by her voice, on a 1947 radio broadcast, and became an enthusiastic propagator of her career in consultation with the conductor Tullio Serafin. As her husband, Meneghini commented in his biography

of his wife, Siciliani engaged her as early as 1949 to sing in Stradella's oratorio *San Giovanni Battista* at his Perugia Festival. In 1951 he took her to the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino to sing *Elektra* in *Vesti di Sibilla*. He was instrumental in introducing her to the key parts in her career, Norma and Violetta in *La Traviata*. From then on he was always looking for roles to show off her career.

Some years later, when Siciliani had moved to La Scala,



Siciliani... impresario

he again influenced Callas's repertoire — as Meneghini reports: "It was Siciliani who suggested to Maria — after the success of her Norma, *La Traviata* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rossini's *Armeda* and *Che rubini le Medee*". These were to prove two of the diva's major triumphs.

Siciliani was equally perceptive in employing the very different gifts of Tebaldi and the tenor Mario Del Monaco, and in engaging conductors for relevant repertory, most notably Victor De Sabata, Karajan and Dimitri Mitropoulos.

He is survived by his wife Ambra and a son and daughter.

Alan Glyth

Francesco Siciliani, opera administrator; born March 3, 1911; died December 17, 1996

Sir Basil Nield

An elegy to the assize circuit

IN THE days before the Beeching Report destroyed the assize circuit in 1973, Sir Basil Nield, who died aged 83, had the distinction — which can now never be equalled — of being the only judge to have sat in every assize town in England and Wales. To coincide with their abolition, he published his own advice to the circuit system, *Parasitism to the Assize*, an elegiac memoir illustrated by his own drawings and photographs.

He was the son of Liverpool solicitor Charles Edwin Nield, a founding partner in the firm of Nield & Killigan, who later became registrar in the Liverpool district registry of the High Court, the equivalent today of a district judge. Nield's mother was the first female graduate to obtain a degree from St Andrews University. His twin sister Beryl, who became the mayor of Chester, was his lifelong companion.

He was educated at Harrow school and Magdalen college, Oxford, before being called to the Bar in 1926. He joined the Inner Temple and the Northern circuit, beginning practice from the Liverpool chambers of Egerton Stuart Brown. While the assize circuit was always shown, he quickly established himself as someone to be briefed by local solicitors and on circuit, taking part in the ritual and becoming in turn junior, messenger

and crier and keeping the circuit records.

He joined the chambers of Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, later Lord Kilmuir, whose influence led Nield into politics. In 1940 he was elected Conservative member for Chester, a seat he held for 16 years. In 1938 he had joined the officers' emergency reserve and was commissioned as captain in the Royal Air Force in 1940. By 1941 he was serving as a major at GHQ MEFP and was later on the HQ staff

years later led for the Crown in the celebrated *Cameo* murder case, then, at 13 days, the longest trial in the English legal history. After a retrial, James Kelly was convicted of the murder of Leonard Catterall. Nield was elected a master of the Inner Temple in 1962 and appointed the Recorder of Salford in 1962. Meanwhile in Parliament he had sponsored the private member's bill which became the Adoption of Children Act, which paved the way for adopted children to inherit in the same way as a natural child. He also served on the Home Secretary's Advisory Committee on the Treatment of Offenders, was a member of the Magistrates' Rules Committee and the honorary parliamentary chairman of the Dock and Harbour Authorities Association from 1946 to 1959.

His political career ended when he was appointed the first permanent judge of the crown court of Manchester, a position which would often take him to the Continent over 600 years — he literally toured the country before. In 1970, his arrival at Bury St Edmunds completed an appearance in every Assize town. It was, perhaps, fortunate that along with photog-

raphy, one of the pleasures of his life was travelling.

Nield was as meticulous in his judgments as he had been in his practice. Rarely did he have to change the wording of his judgments. They were rarely overturned, although the Liverpool solicitor, E Rex Makin, recalls that once, sitting in a case in which a dock worker had been decapitated at Garston docks, he accepted the argument that there must have been a safe system of work because this had never happened in 100 years. The Court of Appeal took the view that there was always a first time.

He became justice of the peace for the County Palatine of Lancaster in 1956 and as chancellor of the diocese of Liverpool sat in the Consistory Court. In 1961 he was appointed a governor of Harrow school, a position he held for 10 years. He was appointed a freeman of the City of London in 1963 and in 1977 he became the treasurer of the Inner Temple.

His last years were spent in the King Edward VII Convalescent Home for Officers at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Neither he nor his sister, who died in the mid-1970s, ever married.

James Mortoon

Basil Nield, judge and politician, born May 7, 1903; died December 4, 1996



Nield... Judicial record

Christmas Birthdays

IF ONLY THE Whodongdong, who died in Tokmal, on the Black Sea in the Tsar's era, had taken the boat for Ellis Island, NY, and not Southampton. It would have been a different familiar narrative if Louis, later Lew Grade, 90 tomorrow, had started out on the Lower East Side and not down Brick Lane. Because we still don't have moguls like Lew in Britain — even though we have Lew, the country's too small and the motion picture industry never got that big: Blackpool is not Las Vegas.

Imagine if the venue where Lew became charleston champion of the world had been Madison Square Gardens, not the Albert Hall, then when his knees gave way, he became a booking agent for vaudeville rather than music hall. He would have been there pitching deals in the wide-open decade when live talent was doing radio, and radio talent was prospecting television. Lew would have been in the TV production business since he would have been a business, from Desilu to Aaron Spelling; he was ATW here, but ATW never even matched the size of his Monte Cristo Number Eight rights.

The only talents he hired that were ever his enough for him were the Muppets, and their background was vaudeville. We imagine Lew and Kermit lunching on Caesar salad and examining the opening of his eardrums while planning a corsage of orchids on Miss Piggy and suggesting she lose a little lady. That lunch for talent — and his greatest all-star cast was stuffed with foam!

Christmas Eve Birthdays: John Ashcroft, former chairman, Coloroll Group, 46; Mair Barnes, former managing director, Woolworths, 63; John Barron, actor, 76; James Bolger, racehorse trainer, 54; Ray Bryant, jazz pianist, 55; Dr Anthony Clare, psychiatrist, broadcaster, 65; Colin Cowdrey, cricketer, 64; Jeremy Hindley, racehorse trainer, 63; Dame Joan Littlewood, former director, WRAC, 81; Sir Ivan Lawrence, QC, Conservative MP, 80; John Major, Labour MP, 55; Suzi Menkes, fashion editor, 53; Jenny May, photographer, 68; Thea Porter, fashion designer, 68; Norman Rossington, actor, 68; John Taylor, Ulster Unionist MP, 69; Carol Vorderman, broadcaster, 36; Phillip Ziegler, biographer, 67.

Other Christmas Day Birthdays: Princess Alexandra, 69; Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, 85; Lord Annan, educationalist, 80; Sheila Browne, former principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 72; Jimmy Buffet, country rock star, 50;



Christmas Eve Birthdays

Prof Kenneth Calman, government chief medical officer, 56; Genia Cohen, militant Israeli politician, 69; Quentin Crisp, gay writer and humorist, 68; Barbara Follett, founder of Emily's List, 52; Prof Christopher Frayling, cultural historian, 56; Annie Lennox, singer, 36; Gary McAllister, footballer, 32; Shane McGowan, rock singer, 48; Tony Martin, singer and actor, 63; Barbara Maxwell, actress, country singer, 48; Ismail Merchant, film producer, 60; Phyllida Karkov, professor of social work, Bristol University, 60; Eve Pollard, journalist and broadcaster, 61; Noel Redding, rock musician, 51; Sissy Spacek, actress, 47; Phil Spector, record producer, 68; Hilary Spurling, biographer and critic, 65; Steve Warner, country singer, 42.

Boxing Day Birthdays: Barrie Brown, composer, 70; Prof Sir Colin Campbell, chairman, Human Genetics Advisory Commission, 69; Sir Alistair Dunnitt, former editor, the Scotsman, 88; Rohan Kanhai, former cricketer, 61; Eric Kinder, chairman, Smith and Nephew, 69; Thea King, professor of the clarinet, Guildhall School of Music, 71; Jane Lapotka, actress, 62; Denis Quillan, actor, 69; Caroline Reynolds, producer, Coronation Street, 41; Marc Robinson, Conservative MP, 63; Richard Rodney Bennett, composer, born at Wellington 106 December, 1918.

Letter

Richard Richardson writes: It was my very good fortune to be a friend of Anna Pollak (obituary, November 30) for the past 25 years. I visited her cottage many times and Anna would boast of her 23-year-old cat, which she often laughingly remarked was older than she was. She, in turn, visited my humble miner's home — the demise of the coal-mining industry worried this diminutive little mezzo-soprano. She loved my pickled shallots and beetroot, saying they "tasted like wine". And I shall miss her good coffee and tasty cake, but above all her friendship. At times, she would reconstitute with me when I was at odds with the world and all its injustices, and say: "We have all got to live in it."

Death Notices

DONCKA, Maria, pianist born 1912, died 2nd December 1996, at home, Funnary Road, 32, at 10.30. Requiem at St George's, London, at 12.15, December 30th, 1996. Relatives to be contacted at: 020 7173 5957 or 191 191 191 191.

Births

MELLEN To Maggie O'Keefe and John Mellan. The beautiful baby girl was born at the Wellington Women's Hospital, Wellington, on Thursday 19th December, 1996.

Jackdaw



Big hit

TORONTO'S Church of the Universe: Our Mission is to worship God and live with The Tree of Life Marjuna in Harmony With the Universe. *As, so devoutly has the Bishop Reverend Brother Michael J. Baldassar, a bishop of the Church of the Universe, been spreading the Good News that he was recently hauled up before the bench and charged with profane conduct in his sacrament of faith. A court report on the Church of the Universe's website reveals that he appeared before the Justices of peace wearing his underpants on his head in protest against being released from his natty hemp gear.*

Hidden forces

THE first hint of electronic harassment started along with the fake wrong numbers. Most nights before a working day, I would have just fallen asleep when the phone ringer started to "ping" irregularly. When I picked up the receiver, there was no dial tone, and what I heard was the sound of the wire pair being stroked across (probably) a 120 volt AC power source. After a few months, the phone ringer pinging slackened off, and was replaced by car alarms going off just as I got to sleep.

At New Year's, 1983, my next door neighbour moved. I was puzzled because it appeared he just moved down the hallway. A young girl with a toddler moved in next door. Shortly afterwards, the super's son moved in, and five types of harassment started almost immediately:

- * Rapping on the wall between my apartment and the super's son's girlfriend.
- * Extremely loud conversation among visitors who passed by my door on the way

to visit the super's son.

- * Lots of fake wrong-apartment rapping on my door.
- * Very obvious manipulation of the hot/cold water mix every time I showered.
- * Periods of extremely loud music from the super's son's girlfriend's apartment.

The music forced me to complain to the super. The super pretended not to know who was in that apartment initially. I believe that the super is more than just a "hired hand." He gives the appearance of being very much one of the construction/building management "good old boys" in this city.

At the end of 1983, the super's son moved to another floor. The harassment group, including the super's son, turned this vacancy to their advantage. They "renovated" the apartment next to mine, working only nights and weekends, and using as much noise as possible. They were obviously going as slowly as possible. They would plan at least one wall-bang as heavy as any superionic boom just after I started evening meal. This group included a

bunch of ne'er-do-wells who do not have steady work and would party all night. A group like this, sheltered by a member of construction/property management "good old boys", and who could easily have unlimited amounts of cash from members who sell drugs, could easily find the cash needed to get expert advice and equipment. I believe drug money is what allows them access to the transmitters and receivers needed to perform even the simple task of detecting where a neighbour's portable radio is tuned. It is also just possible that among this group there was someone with family or other good connections to government security work. I believe that there are plenty of retired and laid-off government security personnel who had access to the non-lethal electronic weapons technology and who would be happy to help for the right price. *Extract from a window in a tortured soul at the Experimental Xmas Builders. Help needed website at www.netaccess.on.ca/~rover1/. The website starts by pleading for*

help to make a mind control weapon to demonstrate his plight.

Cool spice

THAT evening down the pub he walked in and sat at the table with his mates. "Spice Girl" was all he said — and all his cronies nodded sagely. For the next hour-and-a-half he discussed their pints and discussed the merits of each spice. Paul started: "Victoria — she's pretty classy, but she looks a bit posh for me. Now that red-head Geri on the other hand... " And it went rapidly downhill from there. Blonde Emma was quickly dismissed: "Too cutesy," and the sporty one: "Bit of a tomboy." Which left the debate centre on the decision between Victoria, Geri and Mel B. Mel B was generally rated third, although as one of them said: "That pierced tongue-it could reach... places." Victoria was placed second in the informal poll: "She's fit, but she doesn't smile..." But top of their collective paps was Geri: "She's not raking-thin," "She rocks out!" "She

"almost bashes into the candleabra." Then the pop mags started to print posters. At first he brought them just to "read the interviews," but when I found the posters taped roughly across the back of his wardrobe door. I knew I had cause to worry. I didn't want to nag, I didn't want to come across as the possessive girl friend from hell but when he started commenting: "Red hair would suit you," I began to despair.

Eloise Holloway in Sky magazine describes the Spice Syndrome that every girl in the country is being forced to suffer.

while everyone tries to figure out why they bought her. Pull the string on her back and she'll stuff envelopes indefinitely, all the while wondering why she got a liberal arts degree.

Ripped-Off-In-The-Divorce-Settlement Barbie: Pull the string on her back and she'll unload a torrent of insults and death threats for her ex's new wife. Comes with a hatred for all men, and a Malibu Barbie tan (except for a white band on her left hand ring finger).

Twelve-Step Barbie: Pull the string on her back and she says, "Hi, I'm Barbie and I'm an alcoholic." Comes with a "One Day At A Time" bumper sticker, a 30-day chip, and a pack of smokes.

The Humour Insider gives the Barbie that we won't be seeing under the Christmas Tree.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail Jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171 713 4966; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

NO... THE REAL... Mobil... Chance...

Try your hand at our Xmas quiz, page 12
Apple founder tempted to take another bite, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Northern bid in cliffhanger

Takeover Panel holds key to fate of electricity firm

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

NORTHERN Electric's survival was last night hanging in the balance as the Takeover Panel considered the company's appeal against the extension of a crucial bid deadline which would result in the regional power supplier falling victim to a £72 million offer from US predator, CE Electric.

Directors of the panel were deliberating their verdict late into the night as they prepared to make a statement which will decide the outcome of the closely fought bid, which is due to close at an extended deadline of 1pm today. Their decision will be based on an investigation into whether a £250,000 payment was made to Northern's advisers, BZW, in contravention of market rules. The panel announced that the bid closing deadline had been extended from 1pm Friday until today in order to allow time for panel inquiries.

Electricity sector. CE Electric has already been forced to raise its original offer from 630p and has bought a near 30 per cent stake in the market. If the company is taken over, it will become the fourth privatised regional electricity company to have been bought by a US predator. Two months ago, Virginia-based Dominion Resources agreed to pay £1.6 billion for East Midlands Electricity. Earlier this week London Electricity was the target of £1.37 billion merger plans from Entergy, a power company based in New Orleans.

Notebook

Bring City stars down to earth



Alex Brummer

ONE OF THE few holiday movies likely to raise a belly laugh, rather than a stomach full of sentiment, is National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.

For those who have missed the last half-dozen showings, this slightly ham-fisted attempt by Chevy Chase, as head of the Griswold clan, to take on some of the slabbles of the season, from the succulent turkey to the fire-side family gathering, largely revolves around the failure of an anticipated annual bonus to arrive. As our hero daydreams of his family cavorting around a new swimming pool, it becomes apparent that the bonus has been axed and the dreams and aspirations of a middle-class American family have turned to dust.

It is possible to attack such bonuses as an outdated form of paternalism. But the truth is that for certain sectors of the economy, and the City is perhaps the best example, bonuses have displaced salaries as the most important form of payment. In fact the bonuses have become so large, that some recipients use them as a means of paying off debts — an overdraft or mortgage — and downshifting to a lower paid, more intellectually satisfying and rewarding job.

In the City in particular, but in boardrooms generally, bonuses (like executive pay) are out of hand. They have reached levels which bear no relationship to the value of the services performed to the economy and which set a dangerous example — in what is an inflation-prone economy — to the larger number of employees seeking higher pay settlements, to press for them irrespective of productivity.

The examples of bonus excess have proliferated as 1996 has drawn to a close. One has to reach back to the late 1980s to find a time when so much cash has flowed from the big City firms into the pockets of their employees.

But THERE are greater dangers involved. One of the key reasons that senior management at Barclays, prior to the February 1992 collapse, were unwilling to question the income flows from the Far East through by Nick Leeson's apparently

successful trades was that it might have affected their bonuses. Similarly, the big scandal of 1996, Peter Young's diversion into a fantasy world of investment of the funds he managed at Morgan Grenfell, might have been less attractive if his seniors at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, most of whom gave subsequently been sacked, had not been so well incentivised. The Bank of England is among the regulators that have been deeply wary of remuneration schemes that rely too much on incentives and bonuses.

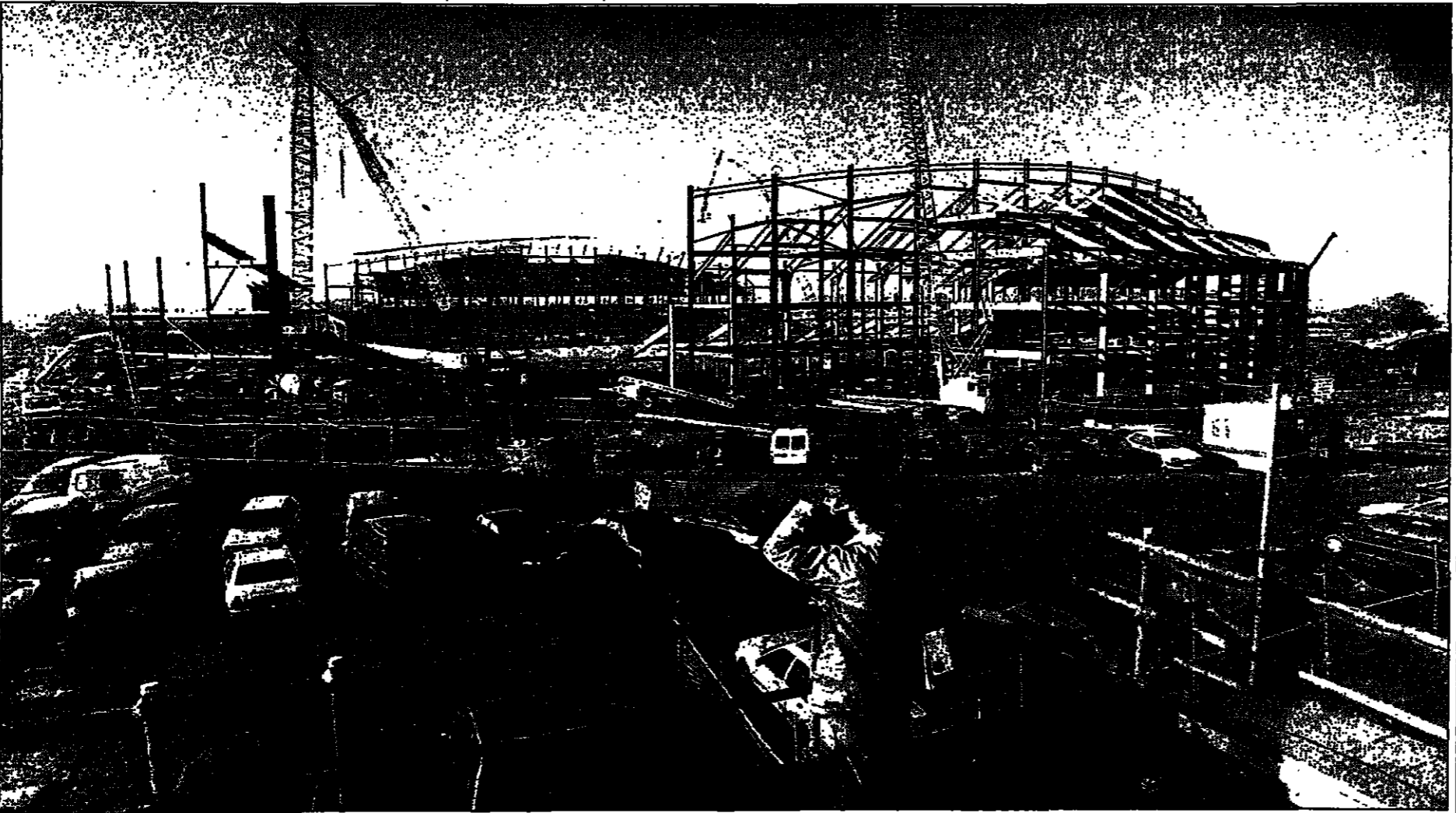
THERE IS nothing inherently wrong, however, in people garnering rich rewards for adding to the national wealth. At the moment there are too many abuses, such as the £250,000 earnings bonus BZW is claiming in its defence of Northern Electric or the £547,000 pay-off just revealed for the former Lucas financial director John Grant a casualty (but in reality a major beneficiary) of the Varsity merger.

It is up to the regulatory system to deal with the abuse, whether through corporate governance mechanisms or tighter compliance, and the tax system to deal with excess. Herein lies an opportunity for Labour which rightly won public support for its campaign against excess in the public utilities — which in turn resulted in the Greenbury committee and the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke's efforts to test share options. Mr Clarke was on the right lines with the share options tax and has reinforced his credentials as a reforming chancellor with his swipe at profit-related pay in his November budget. This, however, is a soft-shoe shuffle. Plainly it is understandable that Labour wants to avoid at all costs being viewed as a high-taxation party, hence the internal debate over the 50 per cent tax band for those earning more than £100,000.

The advantages of such a tax are that it would underpin Mr Blair's Christian Socialist credentials in a clear and understandable way and could have his support among traditional Labour supporters. But as Mr Blair and his shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, are aware, there are many different ways of penalising those on very comfortable, even excessive, incomes in the name of fairness.

This could be done by watering down the tax reliefs available on pension contributions and the funds into which they are paid; the rules governing capital gains (especially on share bonuses or sales) could be tightened; rollover relief — an instrument widely used for small businesses selling out — could be removed. Restoring fairness to the taxation system is a laudable goal.

THE REAL PICTURE/Bolton Wanderers' winning combination could revitalise part of North-west badly hit by job losses. Photograph: Don McPhee/Words: Martyn Halsall



FOOTBALL fans are flocking to an empty pitch eight months before kick-off as the new Bolton Wanderers stadium, part of the £150 million Middlebrook development, takes shape. It is symbolic of a new generation of service-sector jobs coming to the North-

west of England and provides some compensation for the closure of the railway works, which once dominated the nearby town of Horwich, and large local British Aerospace redundancies. About 2,500 workers will be employed during the 18-month construction period

and more than 3,000 permanent jobs are forecast on the 195-acre development, which will also include a 10-acre business park, 250,000 sq ft of offices, six restaurants, a retail park, a 120-bedroom hotel and a new railway station. Agreement for the green-field scheme north of

Bolton has made local traders fear lost business and jobs, but the 1,000-strong Bolton and Bury Chamber of Commerce has supported Middlebrook "on balance". Bolton council is one of the three partners in the scheme, agreed after a public inquiry. The out-of-town shopping

and leisure complex includes Asda, a multi-screen Warner Bros cinema and McDonald's. The site, alongside the M61, will accommodate 5,000 cars. The 25,000 all-seater stadium will provide a new home for Wanderers after a century in the town.

marketing manager, said: "Interest in the stadium from supporters and the business community has been tremendous." Naming rights to the stadium are open to offers. Wanderers hope to celebrate next year's opening with a return to the Premiership.

Mobil swap eases BG's burden

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

BITISH Gas claimed last night to have unscrambled nearly a fifth of its long-term gas contracts when it announced agreed terms with Mobil to swap North Sea assets for more competitive supply terms.

To clinch a deal with Mobil, British Gas is handing over a 5 per cent interest in the Beryl gas field, a near 30 per cent stake in a block in the Nevis field and 2.5 per cent in the Scottish Area Gas Evacuation system. The asset swap is a benchmark for later deals with companies like Shell which are likely to see British Gas trading slugs of its prize UK asset, the Morecambe Bay gas field.

has been left with pricey gas it cannot sell. Like BP, Mobil has agreed to cut the amount of gas being taken by British Gas and the selling price. But the companies refused to put a precise value on the latest deal. The deal is crucial to the survival of Centrica, the newly formed British Gas supply subsidiary which is to be damaged from BG's other main business, the TransCo pipelines business, in February.

The assets being taken over by Mobil will boost the oil company's North Sea presence considerably. The company's reserves will rise by an extra 27 million barrels of oil equivalent (boe), and daily production will increase by 9,000 boe. Commenting on the agreement, news of which was clipped out yesterday just before the market closed, Roy Gardner, chief executive designate of Centrica, said: "This agreement with Mobil represents another important success in the renegotiation of our North Sea gas purchase contracts. I am delighted that our overall take-or-pay problem is significantly reduced."

Finance chief Grant leaves LucasVarity

Pauline Springett

THE revamp of Anglo-American engineering group LucasVarity claimed its first high profile victim yesterday with the surprise resignation of finance director John Grant.

A company spokesman yesterday vehemently denied that Mr Grant had rowed with Mr Rice. "Mr Arnold was felt by the board to have more global experience," he said. Like his predecessor, Mr Arnold is 49 years old and British. Sir Brian Pearce, chairman of LucasVarity, conceded that Mr Grant had been "disappointed" that he was not being retained. "John had designs on becoming a chief executive officer at some stage in his career," he said.

Chancellor faces new rate row

Sarah Ryle

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke will come under pressure from the Bank of England to raise base rates again early in the new year, the minutes of his October meeting with the governor, Eddie George, suggested yesterday.

chances of a rate rise after the January 15 meeting. Although the Chancellor granted the Bank's demands for a rise in rates to 6 per cent in October, the minutes of the monthly monetary meeting showed he tried to dampen down Mr George's concern that an increase might not be enough.

He was concerned about the September rise in underlying inflation to 2.9 per cent and warned about price rises in the service sector, parts of the retail sector and falling unemployment. Mr Clarke focused on non-retail price inflation factors such as benign producer price inflation in a still unsteady manufacturing sector. Mr George's call for instant tightening, which he said was essential to reduce the need for a bigger rise in base rates at a later date, was countered by the Chancellor who argued that there were no immediate inflationary pressures.

per cent flash estimate of economic growth in the three months to September. But he noted that the acceleration in activity was not starting. He added that although he expected retailers to have a good Christmas, there was no sign of an excessive consumer boom. Simon Briscoe, of Nikko bank, said: "Crucially, the Chancellor spoke about seeing no case for a rise of more than 25 basis points. Since October, the Budget has turned out to be tougher than the market and [we imagine] the governor expected. The Chancellor will say that this buys time to see the GDP figures for the fourth quarter and the next Bank inflation report."

McDonald's wises up to the poor taste of wilted lettuce

Mark Tran in New York

MCDONALD'S may be conquering the world with its Big Macs but it is having problems selling them back home. The fast-food corporation with a presence in 101 countries is being forced to change its recipe after its own research showed people preferring burgers at the rival Wendy's and Burger King.

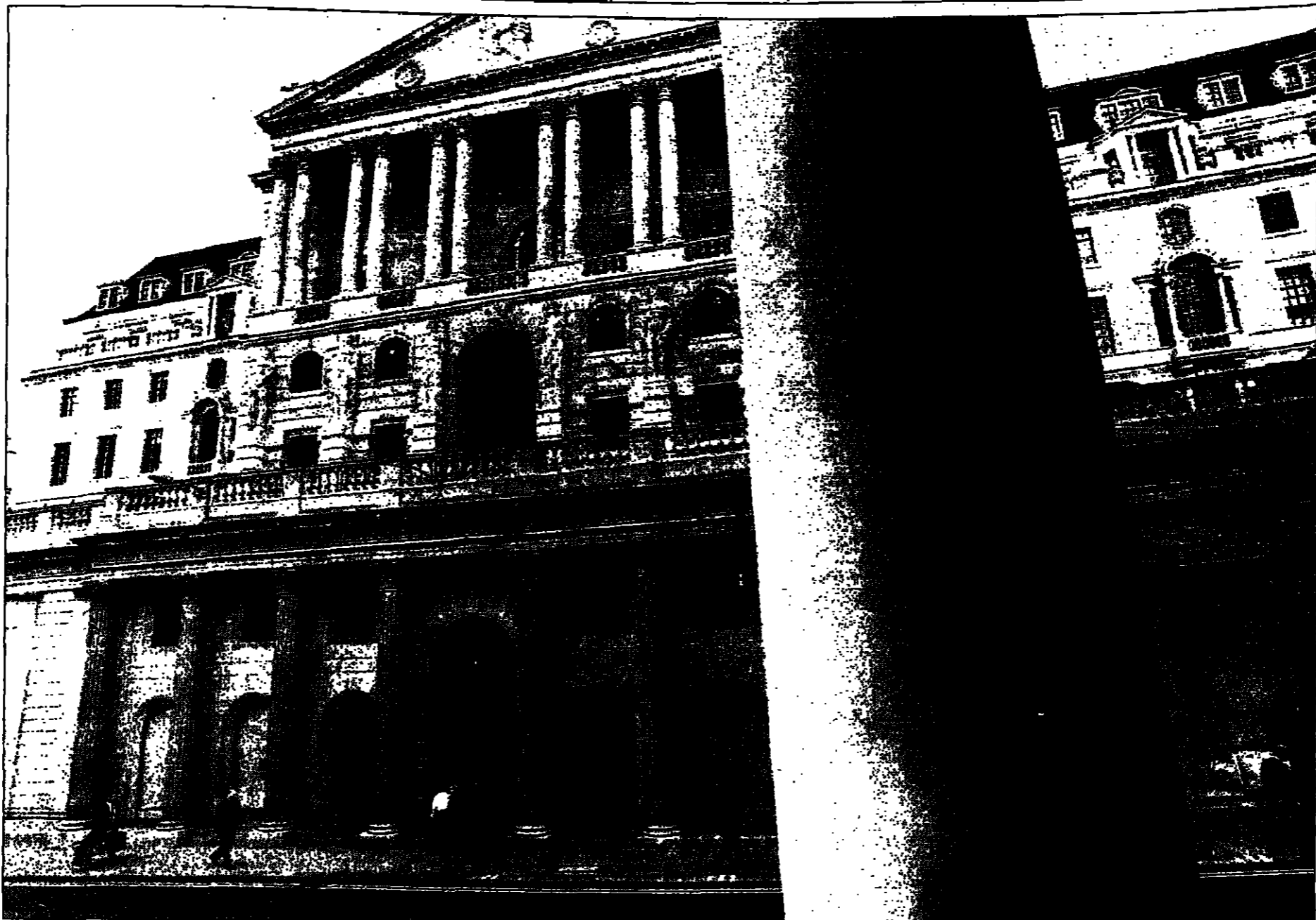
McDonald's, admitting that it overcooks some burgers, is planning to add salt and pepper to the ingredients, rather than relying on tomato ketchup to give them their taste. For the "Arch Deluxe", its new burger aimed at adults, McDonald's will even break with its long tradition of slapping the lettuce and tomato along with the burger into a microwave, a practice that makes Big Macs taste of warm, wilted lettuce. At rivals, the trimmings are added by customers. These changes follow criticism from franchisees — the people who pay McDonald's for the privilege of being allowed to sell its burgers. The Deluxe line, introduced earlier this year, has drawn unflattering reviews from analysts, who called them "marginally mediocre".

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.04	France 8.50	Italy 2.504	Singapore 2.387
Austria 17.74	Germany 2.522	Malta 0.586	South Africa 7.81
Belgium 51.90	Greece 431.00	Netherlands 2.832	Spain 212.25
Canada 2.238	Hong Kong 12.82	New Zealand 2.30	Sweden 11.27
Cyprus 0.76	India 50.75	Norway 10.525	Switzerland 2.162
Denmark 8.29	Ireland 2.078	Portugal 256.50	Turkey 170.822
Finland 7.57	Israel 3.4	Saudi Arabia 4.23	USA 1.635

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Fouls, floats, Footsie and footie. Try your hand at our Xmas quiz



Q: Who did Bank of England governor Eddie George warn of taking artificial stimulants? A: European countries making a "headlong" dash to meet the convergence criteria for monetary union. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID GILLTON

Put your wits against this quiz to test your knowledge of the financial news this year. Set by Ian King, Dan Atkinson and Sarah Ryle

- Hatches 1. Which of the following hotel companies floated this year on the stock market: Millennium and Copthorne; Principal Hotels; Jarvis Hotels; Macdonald Hotels; Thistle Hotels?
Matches 2. Which company announced plans to more than double in size through an ambitious American acquisition, only to find shareholders less than enthusiastic?
3. Which company decided to ring the Royal?
4. Which of the following companies did the notoriously predatory UK Active

Value fund not have a stake in this year? (a) Westminster Scaffolding; (b) Greycoat; (c) Kenwood Appliances; (d) Hogg Robinson.
5. Several takeover bids were described as "the most boring in living memory". One of the most tedious involved a property company and a south London department store scrapping it out. Who were they and what happened?
6. Shortly after winning its \$2.9 billion tussle with Rocco Forte, what company did Granada launch a dawn raid on?
7. Apart from BT, which was the other Footsie company to announce a multi-billion merger with a US company?
8. Quoted restaurant groups were all the rage this year. Who tucked into My Kinda Town and Pelican Group?
9. When the crackle went out of the electricity sector, water was the next utility to excite takeover fever. Which was the first water company to get taken over, and who bought it?
10. Who got Carter?
11. Match the following bidders and targets involved in hostile bids this year: Wessex Water, Granada, Macallan-Glenlivet, BET, Southern Electric, Rentokil, Ely's of Wimbledon, ScottishPower, Lloyd's Chemists, William Cook, Forte, Gehe, Southern Water, Highland Distilleries, South West Water, TR European Growth Trust, Triplex Lloyd, Panther Securities, Unichem, Severn Trent, Klein-

wort European Privatisation Trust.
12. Before its merger with MCI, who did British Telecom originally try to make a connection with?
13. Who owns Uncle Tom Coleleigh and all?
14. Which company had the shortest stay in the Footsie 100 this year?
15. What did retiring Euro-tunnel boss Sir Alastair Morton receive as a present at his leaving bash?
16. Which high street retailer's proposed flotation was rained off for the second time in as many years?
17. One of Britain's biggest companies changed their famous name just months after triumphing in one of the year's biggest takeover bids.



Who was it, and why?
18. Which professor, while not mad, sent his employers into a rage?
19. Michael Lawrence found himself looking for a new job on January 4. What did he do and who replaced him?
20. One by one, the old corporate raiders of yesteryear fell away in 1996. Which of them decided that four into one did go, and which fell foul of Viking raiders?
21. Which was the mouse that roared at building giant Redland - but still fell foul of French control?
22. Which Fleet Street press baron was replaced by a socialist peer?
23. Which of the following did not go into administrative receivership? (a) Coal Investments; (b) Chamberlain Philpotts; (c) SeaPerfect.
24. Apart from Lords Hanson and Stevens, which other peer stood down from heading a Footsie company this year?
25. Where wasn't Mum going any more?
26. The Rank Organisation disappeared this year. True or False?
27. Which were the two drinks companies that saw the fiz disappear from their relationship?
Re-hatched
28. Who was reinstated, after he got the chop, because shareholders wanted him back?

In the money
29. Who has been waiting nearly all year to scoop £30 million?
30. Who decided that they couldn't do without the ultimate executive toy?
31. Who was awarded £3 million in compensation by the High Court after claiming he was struggling to find work?

...and out of it
32. How many profits warnings were put out in January? (a) none; (b) five; (c) eight; (d) 12.
33. Who gave up a £200,000-a-year job to spend more time with homeless alcoholics?
34. Who said they were taking their company private, only to change their mind?
35. Who was sent reeling by sloppos, and who sent the sloppos spinning?
36. How many profits warn-

ings did our operator Inspirations put out? (a) three; (b) two; (c) one; (d) none.
37. Which market saw nearly every player's profits wiped out after the year's most vicious price war, and who caused it?
Power plays
38. What, according to American economist Rudiger Dornbusch, is rather like finding out that your mother-in-law has a twin sister?
39. What happened to the Chancellor's Wise Men in January? Can you name three of them?
40. Which economist's imperfect grasp of information won him the Nobel Prize?
41. What, according to a book by Roger Bootle, the chief economist of City firm HSBC, died a death this year?
42. Who did not, like what he saw in The Mirror last month - and what was it that caused such alarm?

Meet the new boss
43. Which famous boys' club admitted a woman?
44. Which parliamentary seat is Asda chairman Archie Norman contesting for the Conservatives?
45. Which of the following companies is not headed by a known Labour sympathiser: (a) Northern Foods; (b) Arjo Wiggins Appleton; (c) United News and Media; (d) The Body Shop.

46. At the end of the year, who was chief executive of Loughborough? (a) Tiny Rowland; (b) Nick Morrell; (c) Dieter Bock; (d) Mohammed Al-Fayed.
47. Name the football clubs associated with these millionaire businessmen: (a) Sir



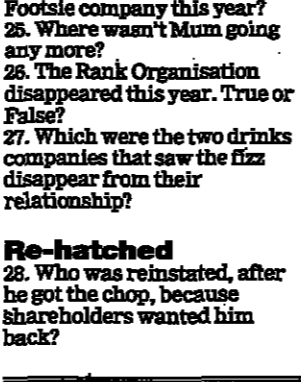
48. Which Footsie company got its kangaroos tied down by the aborigines?
49. Which company decided to Do It All alone?
50. Why did Welwyn Hatfield council have a row with Slough?
51. Name the investment group that was expected to stop taking on new business after huge problems surfaced in its computerised settlement system.

Answers to the quiz appear below



Jack Hayward; (b) Steve Gibson; (c) Alan Sugar; (d) Lionel Pickering; (e) Daniel Fiszman; (f) Jack Walker; (g) Chris Akers; (h) Stephen Bolter; (i) Owen Oyston; (j) Dan McCauley; (k) Peter Johnson

Grave news
48. Which grand old name returned after a 70 year absence?
49. Which famous old name puffed back to the market in October after a 10 year absence?



Art Gallery
EXHIBITION OF 20th CENTURY JIGGERY

ZENITH advertisement featuring a large image of a watch and the text 'LIFE IS IN THE MOVEMENT' and 'ZENITH TIME CO. (GB) LTD. TEL 0181 851 4391 FAX 0181 892 9256'.

Apple founder tempted back to take second bite



Steve Jobs's return casts him as struggling computer company's Buzz Lightyear. Nicholas Bannister reports

FEW OUSTED chairmen get the chance of a second bite of the same apple. But Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Computer who left the group after a boardroom putsch in 1985, is the exception. Mr Jobs is to get a second chance to restore Apple's fortunes after its \$400 million (£240 million) takeover of its NeXT software company. He will report to the current chairman, Gilbert Amelio, and be expected to breathe new life into the group's software business. Mr Amelio made no bones about the magic he expects from Mr Jobs. Apple, he said, was welcoming back "its most talented visionary". "Steve Jobs is someone who can inspire a new generation of customers and software developers and show that Apple remains the industry home for innovation and excitement." Mr Jobs, who claimed that much of the industry had been living off the

group's Macintosh computer for the past 10 years, forecast another breakthrough through which would leapfrog existing platforms and "fuel Apple and the industry copycats for the next 10 years and beyond". Sticking stuff, but Apple needs more than inspiration to survive. No one has challenged its record for innovation, but commercial success has been elusive and Mr Jobs first parted company with Apple because for all its wizardry it was being swamped by the Intel combination - IBM-compatible personal computers using Microsoft Windows and Intel microprocessors. Since leaving Apple, Mr Jobs has had successes and failures. He co-founded NeXT and owns half of the company. However, the cube-like computer it designed and manufactured attracted little more than critical praise. Manufacturing was

halted after about 50,000 were sold in 4½ years. The software developed for it looked more promising. Apple is looking for a new operating system for its own computers after its own costly attempt to develop one was abandoned when it ran into a sea of problems. But NeXT's software skills were not Apple's first choice. It wanted to take over another software company called Be, but failed after the two sides were unable to agree terms. Mr Jobs's other company, Pixar Animation Studios, made Toy Story, the all computer-animated film which became a box-office hit and turned its star, Buzz Lightyear, into the most sought-after toy this Christmas. Mr Jobs has now been cast as the Buzz Lightyear of Apple, the superhero who comes good in the end. Apple fans will welcome his return. But real life might prove tougher than film fantasy.

Answers to business quiz

- 1. They all date from the 1980s. 2. Priced at £100 million, it was the largest IPO in the world. 3. The company was founded in 1985. 4. The company was founded in 1985. 5. The company was founded in 1985. 6. The company was founded in 1985. 7. The company was founded in 1985. 8. The company was founded in 1985. 9. The company was founded in 1985. 10. The company was founded in 1985. 11. The company was founded in 1985. 12. The company was founded in 1985. 13. The company was founded in 1985. 14. The company was founded in 1985. 15. The company was founded in 1985. 16. The company was founded in 1985. 17. The company was founded in 1985. 18. The company was founded in 1985. 19. The company was founded in 1985. 20. The company was founded in 1985. 21. The company was founded in 1985. 22. The company was founded in 1985. 23. The company was founded in 1985. 24. The company was founded in 1985. 25. The company was founded in 1985. 26. The company was founded in 1985. 27. The company was founded in 1985. 28. The company was founded in 1985. 29. The company was founded in 1985. 30. The company was founded in 1985. 31. The company was founded in 1985. 32. The company was founded in 1985. 33. The company was founded in 1985. 34. The company was founded in 1985. 35. The company was founded in 1985. 36. The company was founded in 1985. 37. The company was founded in 1985. 38. The company was founded in 1985. 39. The company was founded in 1985. 40. The company was founded in 1985. 41. The company was founded in 1985. 42. The company was founded in 1985. 43. The company was founded in 1985. 44. The company was founded in 1985. 45. The company was founded in 1985. 46. The company was founded in 1985. 47. The company was founded in 1985. 48. The company was founded in 1985. 49. The company was founded in 1985. 50. The company was founded in 1985. 51. The company was founded in 1985. 52. The company was founded in 1985. 53. The company was founded in 1985. 54. The company was founded in 1985. 55. The company was founded in 1985. 56. The company was founded in 1985. 57. The company was founded in 1985. 58. The company was founded in 1985. 59. The company was founded in 1985. 60. The company was founded in 1985. 61. The company was founded in 1985. 62. The company was founded in 1985. 63. The company was founded in 1985. 64. The company was founded in 1985. 65. The company was founded in 1985. 66. The company was founded in 1985. 67. The company was founded in 1985. 68. The company was founded in 1985. 69. The company was founded in 1985. 70. The company was founded in 1985. 71. The company was founded in 1985. 72. The company was founded in 1985. 73. The company was founded in 1985. 74. The company was founded in 1985. 75. The company was founded in 1985. 76. The company was founded in 1985. 77. The company was founded in 1985. 78. The company was founded in 1985. 79. The company was founded in 1985. 80. The company was founded in 1985. 81. The company was founded in 1985. 82. The company was founded in 1985. 83. The company was founded in 1985. 84. The company was founded in 1985. 85. The company was founded in 1985. 86. The company was founded in 1985. 87. The company was founded in 1985. 88. The company was founded in 1985. 89. The company was founded in 1985. 90. The company was founded in 1985. 91. The company was founded in 1985. 92. The company was founded in 1985. 93. The company was founded in 1985. 94. The company was founded in 1985. 95. The company was founded in 1985. 96. The company was founded in 1985. 97. The company was founded in 1985. 98. The company was founded in 1985. 99. The company was founded in 1985. 100. The company was founded in 1985.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: 'مكتبة من الامم'.

سكرا من الامل

Soccer

County set to join the Nottingham dole queue

Ian Ross

THE city of Nottingham was left without a full-time football manager yesterday when, with unseasonal timing, Nottingham's Colin Murphy and Steve Thompson...

Murphy and Thompson, the team manager, leave Meadow Lane after a 16-month spell in charge during which they guided the club to last season's promotion play-offs...

Two of their more experienced players, the captain Gary Strodger and Tony Agana, have been put in temporary charge of the first team.

the Arsenal striker allegedly assaulted Forest's defender Nikola Jerkan.

Earlier yesterday Lodge confirmed that he had dismissed Wright for violent conduct but gave Arsenal some encouragement of the dismissal being expunged, which would spare Wright an automatic three-match ban...

It is understood that the Romanian forward has signed a three-year contract and will move to Mexico next Monday.

Dimitrescu was left out of the squad at Chelsea last Saturday, when West Ham's manager, Harry Redknapp revealed that the player was talking to a Mexican club.

Italy will warm up for their World Cup qualifying visit to England in February with a friendly international against Northern Ireland in Palermo on January 22.

Dalglish ranges into golf

Patrick Glenn

KENNY DALGLISH yesterday accepted an offer of employment from the Rangers chairman David Murray, but his new job could hardly be described as a return to professional football.

The former Liverpool and Blackburn manager will instead work for a Murray-owned, Edinburgh-based sports marketing company.

It had been speculated six weeks ago that Dalglish would be given a wide-ranging brief as chief scout for Rangers. Now it transpires that, if he does help the football club, Rangers will have to pay a fee to the sports agency.

them a service. If he does something for them and Rangers accept this service there will be a reimbursement to Carnegie.

In practice Dalglish is likely to have little to do with football, and nothing to do with Rangers. As New Business Development Manager his job will be to entice new clients to the company.

Its customers presently range from individuals such as Sam Torrance and Ally McCole to companies such as Air UK and Mintec Holdings.

It is believed that Murray's initial approach to Dalglish involved working for Rangers but the offer was rejected. Had that story not leaked out, the entire matter might have been dropped.

American Football

Upstarts dethrone 49ers

Mark Tran in New York

THE San Francisco 49ers' reign in the National Football Conference West is over. The Carolina Panthers, a team that did not exist two years ago, held off the Pittsburgh Steelers 18-14 to clinch the title in a dramatic finale.

The Panthers, who had beaten the 49ers twice during the regular season, were indebted on Sunday to Chad Collins, an obscure safety, who made a diving interception at the back of the end zone with 29 seconds left.

Team talk
The independent news and reports service
0891 33 77+

Table with 3 columns: Team, Score, Location. Includes Arsenal, Aston Villa, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bolton, Brentford, Burnley, Chelsea, Coventry City, Derby County, Everton, Huddersfield, Leeds United, Sheffield Wed, Southampton, Stoke City, Sunderland, Tottenham Hot, West Ham, Wimbledon, Wolves, Celtic, Rangers, QPR.



Beefing up the England cause

Paul Allott on how Ian Botham has thrown himself into his coaching role with all the enthusiasm of his playing days

JUST in case anyone needs reminding, the statistics speak for themselves: 102 Tests, 383 wickets, 5,200 runs, the fastest ever double hundred in terms of balls faced, 120 catches, the best all-round performance in a Test match — 114 and 13 for 103 — not to mention the number of matches turned and won by his performances.

Botham is still his hero, and more. He is now their inspiration, mentor, coach, and technical adviser. He is primarily involved with the bowlers and they look upon him with wide-eyed respect; he is seen as an "awesome character" by Darren Gough, "and just having him around the place is enough to inspire us".

"Initially I wanted him involved on the periphery, just hoping that some of his unique talents and enthusiasm would rub off on the bowlers, but now three weeks into this tour his involvement and his impact on the players has been enormous. It's worked much better than I ever imagined," says Lloyd.

There was no table thumping, just encouragement and I offered a few ideas to put the bowling back on the rails," he says, confident that his dual media/coaching role will not cause conflict in or outside the dressing room.

His agenda through this tour has consisted of an early round of golf, a 9am tee-off enabling him still to indulge a sporting passion, then to get to the back of the competition box before play. An encouraging word to Silverwood, advice on Ronnie Irani's back and a small adjustment to his action, a gentle gee-up for Mullally and instructions for Castledale to pitch it up a fraction.

Rugby Union Bath in dreamland

Robert Armstrong

"A DREAM come true" was how Bath's director of rugby John Hall described the holders' Pilkington Cup tie at home to Leicester, after the sixth-round draw was made at Twickenham yesterday.

Bath can expect in excess of £100,000 in gate receipts from the 17,500 capacity crowd but there is a strong possibility that this lucrative encounter may have to be postponed to February. If Leicester win their Heineken European Cup semi-final against Toulouse at Welford Road on January 4, they must play either Cardiff or Brive in the final in Cardiff on January 26.

Michael Lynch, the former Wallabies fly-half who was enlisted by Bath to make the draw, did his own club Saracens no favours in pairing them with Wasps, the 1995 finalists, albeit at home.

Ninth-placed Bristol's assurance of the eighth-placed Gloucester next Sunday now becomes part of a relegation dogfight, and Davies said: "To come to Christmas, halfway through a season when everybody is

contracted, and to say four are going down is just barmy." The two-week dispute between the Welsh Rugby Union and its referees has been resolved. The Welsh Rugby Union referees voted by six districts to three in a series of weekend ballots to accept revised proposals.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Sport, Result. Includes Soccer, Basketball, Ice Hockey, Cricket, American Football.

Table with 2 columns: Sport, Result. Includes Boxing Day fixtures.

Table with 2 columns: Sport, Result. Includes Soccer fixtures.

Table with 2 columns: Sport, Result. Includes American Football fixtures.

Table with 2 columns: Sport, Result. Includes Rugby Union fixtures.

England set for a White Christmas

David Hopps in Harare

CRAIG WHITE flew into Zimbabwe from Australia last night and is expected to replace Chris Silverwood in England's first Test of the second and final Test which starts here on Boxing Day.

Alan Mullally may find his place also under threat, from Andy Caddick, and Ronnie Irani has obviously been advised by the England coach David Lloyd to remodel his action following action. The last time that an overball was attempted on tour — Devon Malcolm, South Africa, last winter — it ended in disaster.

The England squad have been refreshed by a scenic detour to Victoria Falls beside the adrenalin rush of Bulawayo and the first drawn Test to end with scores level. Historians should note that England's fate will owe much to umpiring leniency towards a succession of deliberately wide deliveries from the Zimbabwe attack.

"You bowl wides and you know you do, churred the English side who were stretched, to their opponents many hours after the match. Several of the Zimbabwe players happily joined in.

Heath Streak, who bowled the final over with England still 13 runs short, admitted during yesterday's flight to Harare: "I was very lucky to get away with that fourth delivery in the last over. It was pretty wide, but I knew by then that the umpires were prepared to give us some latitude; they were pretty lenient."

Incompetent might be nearer the mark. Ian Robinson prides himself on being one of the top three umpires in the world, but on this evidence it is a world of his own rather than the rest of us live in. He stood immobile as Streak and the leg-spinner Paul Strang pressed legality to the limit. The likes of Dickie Bird would have hopped from foot to foot before declaring that there was a moral line as well as a white one.

Even the finish was reduced to farce when, an hour after the match, Robinson and the match referee Hanuman Singh remained unable to agree on which England batsman had been run out off the back of the competition box, and finally a relaxing, contemplative and analytical beer with his bowlers at the end of the day. Twenty wickets taken by England in the Bulawayo Test are testimony to his input.

Since then most of the England players have chosen to closet themselves away. Their resentment at "a succession of personal attacks" is such that the team have decided to boycott the traditional Christmas Day pantomime staged by the town of Harare.

It is tempting to reply that as the first three weeks of the tour was a pantomime, another one will be superfluous. But such brooding bodes more ill than England's tour manager Alan Walsh seems able to comprehend.

Apart from the fact that this is a narrow attitude to touring, and should therefore be discouraged, the resulting boredom and tension will reduce still further the prospects of England improving their dismal overseas record. Sorry, ladies, shouldn't have said "dismal"; there goes the New Year's Eve drinks party...

Alan Walsh '85, the former Sussex captain, yesterday joined Kent on a five-year contract, with the 37-year-old batsman Neil Taylor moving in the opposite direction.

RACING: 11 CARDS FOR BOXING DAY

Chris Hawkins gives a confident vote to last season's winning team in the King George VI Chase

Dunwoody is the man for the job

THE King George VI Chase, now sponsored by Pertemps, has a habit of throwing up multiple winners and One Man will join exalted company if he is victorious for the second year running on Boxing Day.

Pendil, Captain Christy, Silver Buck, Wayward Lad, Desert Orchid and The Yellow all won it in successive seasons and, on the evidence of the brilliance he has shown so far, One Man would not be out of place among such famous names.

Four of the six on this list went on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup - Pendil and Wayward Lad being the two that missed out.

Like this pair, One Man has so far looked much better over three miles on a flat circuit than over three and a quarter around Cheltenham's undulations, and it would be no surprise if chasing's ultimate prize eluded him.

That is beside the point at the moment, however, and with doubts about several of his opponents on Thursday he has an obvious chance of landing a second King George.

His virtues have long been extolled but it is to remind those who may not be familiar with the top class chasing scene, this is a spring-heeled, fast-jumping grey in the Desert Orchid mould.

Kempton suited Desert Orchid down to the ground and he won four King Georges, two of them with Richard Dunwoody in the saddle.

Dunwoody, of course, partnered One Man last year, when the race was run at Sandown, and stands on the threshold of four victories which would elevate him above Fred Winter and Tommy Carmody, the only other riders with three wins to their credit.

It is widely assumed that One Man is suited by courses such as Kempton, although on his only previous run here two seasons ago he fell at the 12th in the Racing Post Chase. That is the only time he has hit the deck in his 14-race chasing career, although he once unsaddled Tony Dobbin at Wetherby.

With Dunwoody, the supreme artist, in the saddle the pairing are as near to poetry in motion as one can get in



Leading duo... Richard Dunwoody and One Man will be odds-on to follow up last season's victory in the King George VI Chase

this rough and tumble game: he would be ironic and very sad if he failed to get round. Assuming they stand up what is to be expected?

Rough Quest is certainly the best of the challengers but Terry Casey has voiced worries about the ground for last season's Grand National winner.

Taking last term's Cheltenham Gold Cup form literally, Rough Quest finished runner-up to Imperial Call, beaten four lengths, with One Man trailing in a leg-weary sixth.

Undoubtedly Rough Quest, who will be 11 at the turn of the year, has improved both physically and mentally with age.

There was once a school of thought that he was a bit "doggy" and not keen on a struggle but, ridden for a lister burst as he was by Mick Fitzgerald in the National, he can unleash a telling turn of speed.

Indeed if he comes to the last within a length of One Man we could be in for an apple and cheese having backed the favourite at a skinny

price will be shaking. The tactics on One Man will surely be to try and draw Rough Quest's sting and get him "at it" some way from home.

Strong Promise is a fascinating runner. He is only a five-year-old and only one horse of that age, Manicou in 1990, has won the race.

It is lacking a great deal of Strong Promise, who on official ratings is around three stones inferior to One Man, to take on top class opponents at levels at this stage of his career but one thing in his favour is his liking for fast ground.

If Rough Quest runs he may well be regarded as the value, but I expect to see One Man's name added to that roll of honour.

See More looks the business in Feltham Chase

SEE MORE BUSINESS looks best of the rest on a Kempton card that may be short on numbers but not on quality, writes Chris Hawkins.

Paul Nicholls, the trainer, thinks the world of this young horse who goes for the Feltham Novices' Chase in Ireland where he went down by a length to Dorcas Pride who is unbeaten over fences.

They are talking about going for the Cheltenham Gold Cup with the winner so See More Business (2.10) must be pretty smart, although he will have to be to beat Aardwolf who jumped well when beating Major Summit at Sandown.

Only four go to post for the Wayward Lad Novices' Chase but all are prolific winners. Potter's Bay is the likely favourite but I just prefer Mister Drum (2.45) who loves a right-handed track and has been winning with something in his eye.

At Wetherby, the big race is the Rowland Meyrick Chase in which Jodami shoulders top weight. It will be a fine performance if he can see off some aspiring youngsters.

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The two met at Ayr last month with The Grey Monk, eased down, coming out on top by five lengths. Jodami has a six pull but that may not be enough, writes Chris Hawkins.

The Grey Monk has since found Coome Hill too good for him over a longer trip in the Hennessy at Newbury but that may not turn out to be a bad effort.

Call It A Day is also on the upgrade but this three miles and a furlong may stretch his stamina.

David Nicholson trains Call It A Day and also sends General Pershing and The Captain's Wish on the long haul from his Cotswold base.

General Pershing, who joves the mud, has been off the course for a long time, having previously been trained by Gordon Richards, and has at least one tough opponent in the In-form Super Saver (2.45) in the Supermarket Chase.

There is a saying that one should never back the top weight in a handicap hurdle but I am flying in the face of that perceived wisdom in selecting The Captain's Wish (2.10) in the Boxing Day Hurdle. He deserves to get his head in front and made the hat-trick seeking Be Frank pull out all the stops at Warwick.

All-weather win forecast for well-weighted Cavina

THEY threat of frost hangs over Boxing Day's turf meetings, although so far only two inspections are planned: Ayr at 10am tomorrow and Huntingdon at 7.30am on Thursday.

If the worst comes to the worst, punters will be hoping all-weather racing lives up to its name.

Lingfield have managed to stage an extra Boxing Day meeting at short notice, and yesterday the British Horseracing Board sanctioned additional fixtures for Southwell and Wolverhampton on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

Lingfield's card has held up pretty well in the circumstances and there looks to be one attractive bet in the two-mile Reindeer Handicap.

Neil Graham's mare has been struggling from a high handicap mark over hurdles recently, but she looks well enough treated on the form she showed to win by four lengths over the Lingfield course and distance last year.

Wotshambles won well here last time, but it is far from certain he will be in the mood to perform like that again.

Passage Creeping (2.20) and Cedex Le Passage (2.50) will be at short odds, but should be hard to beat.

Kempton card with guide to the form

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

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Ski Hotline advertisement with text: 'The Latest snow and weather reports from almost 200 resorts in Europe and North America. By phone or fax call: 0891 002 006'

Table with 2 columns: Location and Snow conditions (Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun).

Wincanton

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

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Lingfield AW Flat

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

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Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Race details and Results (Winner, Place, Show, etc.).

Handwritten text in a box: 'مركزنا من الاجل'

Hereford

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time. Includes entries like 1.05 Melstock Regatta, 1.35 Draycott, 2.05 Wye Poplars.

1.05 GOOSE NOVICE HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.05 Goose Novice Hurdle, listing runner names, jockeys, and trainers.

1.35 WINGS PLI SELLING HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.35 Wings Pli Selling Hurdle.

2.05 FLEEN FURROW HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.05 Fleen Furrow Hurdle.

2.35 BROADFOOT BURN HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.35 Broadfoot Burn Hurdle.

3.05 TOVE HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.05 Tove Hurdle.

3.35 HERRIES HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.35 Herries Hurdle.

Ayr

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time. Includes entries like 1.25 Whiston, 1.55 Sparty Gyle.

1.25 POINT WINDY SELLING HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.25 Point Windy Selling Hurdle.

1.55 GOOSE NOVICE CHASE

Table of race results for 1.55 Goose Novice Chase.

2.25 ERYNYS HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.25 Eryny's Hurdle.

2.55 WINDY BAG HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.55 Windy Bag Hurdle.

3.25 FLEEN AND LAWN HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.25 Fleen and Lawn Hurdle.

3.55 WYV HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.55 Wyv Hurdle.

Sedgefield

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time. Includes entries like 12.10 Good Hand, 12.40 Inverness.

12.10 GOOD HAND

Table of race results for 12.10 Good Hand.

12.40 INVERNESS

Table of race results for 12.40 Inverness.

1.10 DUNNIBRIDGE HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.10 DunnibrIDGE Hurdle.

1.40 STABLEY DAUGHTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.40 Stabley Daughter Hurdle.

2.10 NORTH VICTORY HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.10 North Victory Hurdle.

2.40 BENT HILL HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.40 Bent Hill Hurdle.

3.10 BALLYMATH HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.10 Ballymath Hurdle.

3.40 WINDY BAG HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.40 Windy Bag Hurdle.

1.00 CHRISTMAS HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.00 Christmas Hurdle.

1.30 REDFOOT HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.30 Redfoot Hurdle.

2.00 WESTBURY HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.00 Westbury Hurdle.

2.30 MOODY DAY HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.30 Moody Day Hurdle.

Market Rasen runners and riders

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time. Includes entries like 12.30 Heartbeat, 1.00 Tomblon Lady.

12.30 HEARTBEAT

Table of race results for 12.30 Heartbeat.

1.00 TOMBLON LADY

Table of race results for 1.00 Tomblon Lady.

1.35 JACK AND BLAVY'S COOK

Table of race results for 1.35 Jack and Blavy's Cook.

2.05 CLOSURE GROUND

Table of race results for 2.05 Closure Ground.

12.45 BOTTLE FRANK

Table of race results for 12.45 Bottle Frank.

12.45 CHRISTMAS HURDLE

Table of race results for 12.45 Christmas Hurdle.

1.15 BONHOMME HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.15 Bonhomme Hurdle.

1.45 ST JOHN ANSELME HURDLE

Table of race results for 1.45 St John Anselme Hurdle.

2.00 HAPPY NEW YEAR HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.00 Happy New Year Hurdle.

2.35 LANGSTON CLIFF HURDLE

Table of race results for 2.35 Langston Cliff Hurdle.

3.05 GIP HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.05 Gip Hurdle.

3.35 HOLLY HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.35 Holly Hurdle.

Market Rasen runners and riders

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time. Includes entries like 11.00-12.00 WOODLANDS BOY, 12.00-13.00 RAMSBURY HILL.

3.05 SANDLANS HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.05 Sandlans Hurdle.

3.35 CHRISTMAS HURDLE

Table of race results for 3.35 Christmas Hurdle.

4.05 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 4.05 Superbaster Hurdle.

4.35 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 4.35 Superbaster Hurdle.

5.05 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 5.05 Superbaster Hurdle.

5.35 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 5.35 Superbaster Hurdle.

6.05 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 6.05 Superbaster Hurdle.

6.35 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 6.35 Superbaster Hurdle.

7.05 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 7.05 Superbaster Hurdle.

7.35 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 7.35 Superbaster Hurdle.

8.05 SUPERBASTER HURDLE

Table of race results for 8.05 Superbaster Hurdle.

8.30 MODERN DAY HURDLE

Table of race results for 8.30 Modern Day Hurdle.

America's most popular TV show...

Blindfold for the first time...

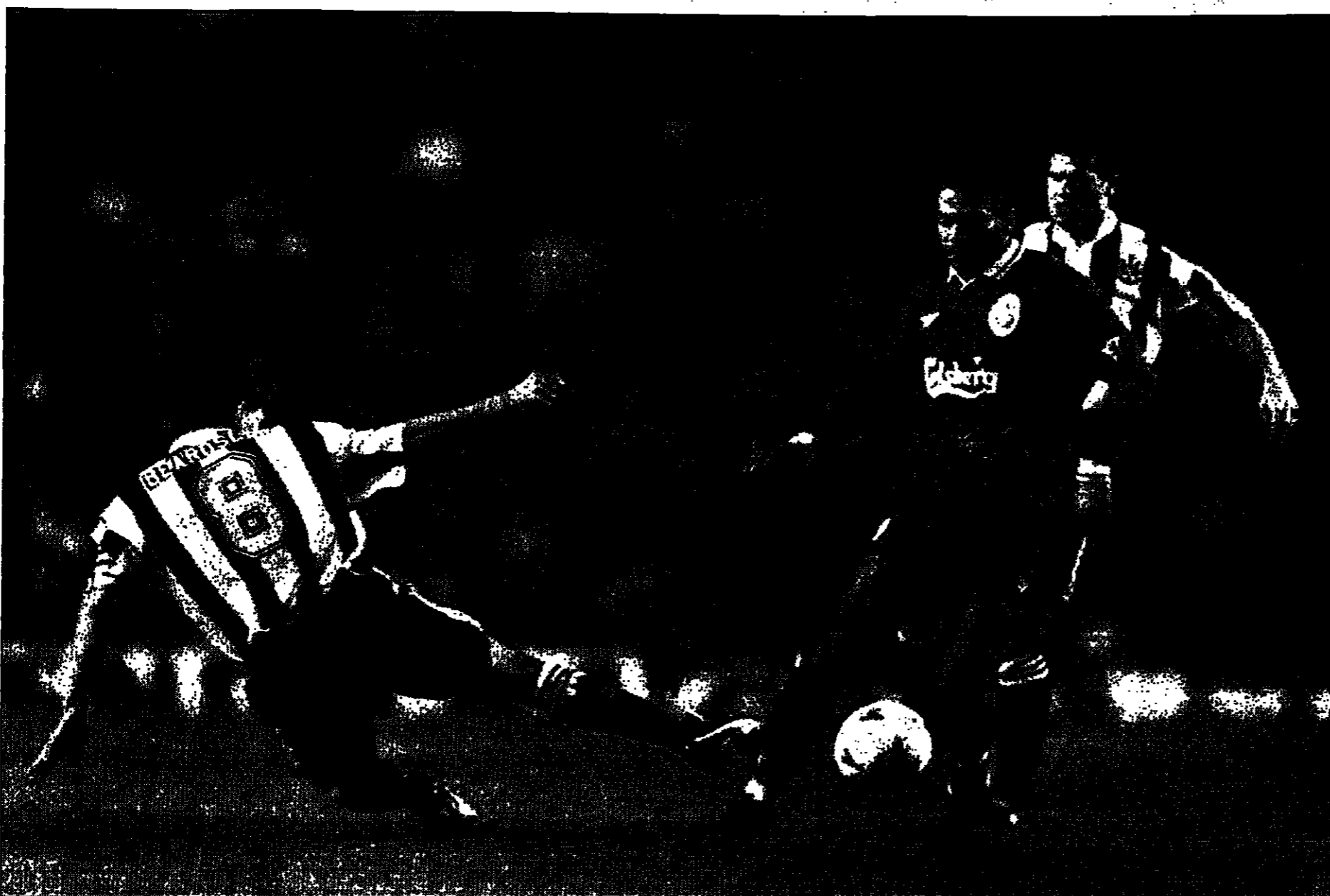
Nottingham loses another manager, page 13
Boxing Day racing details, pages 14 and 15

Bowling along with Botham, page 13
One Man looks for his double, page 14

SportsGuardian

Premiership: Newcastle United 1, Liverpool 1

Fowler widens the gap



Confused by Collymore... Liverpool's striker goes one way and Newcastle's Beardley the other at St James' Park last night

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Shearer strikes but Reds go three points clear

David Lacey

ALAN SHEARER, with his 13th goal of the season, and Robbie Fowler, with his 19th, responded to their cues at St James' Park last night as Newcastle United and Liverpool shared an absorbing match rich in attacking football.

Finality. A failure to win, let alone a defeat, would suggest a premature end to another title challenge was not far off. Memories of the seven-goal extravaganza at Anfield in April, won 4-3 by Liverpool after Newcastle's defences had failed to match the excellence of their attack, remained strong. That result had signalled the finish of last season's title hopes at St James' Park; now even a dull 1-0 home win would at least keep them alive.

Within five seconds, however, the size of Newcastle's task had become ominously apparent. Straight from the kick-off Collymore ran at the defence and sent in Fowler for a chance which ended with Peacock hooking the ball out from under the bar. Fowler had been given outside but that hardly diminished the significance of the moment for Newcastle's defenders.

St James' Park should have celebrated in the 10th minute. Slack Liverpool covering left Ferdinand unmarked as Gillespie, Lee and Beardley worked the ball in to him from the right. Ferdinand turned but lost his footing and did not make proper contact, unlike Ruddock, who was lucky to get away with blocking a centre from Gillespie with a hand.

Newcastle's vulnerability to any sort of half-decent centre began to show itself as McAteer produced some telling crosses from the right. Albert's head intercepted one that Srnicek was never going to reach and when the goalkeeper did get to the next the weakness of his punch might have led to a crisis.

This was not his night. Within two minutes such thoughts had proved idle. The goal was a simple affair, as many against Newcastle tend to be. McManaman turned up unopposed near the left-hand byline and Fowler, equally unattended, had time to collect a ball which arrived behind him before scoring with a low shot.

Ravanelli outburst adds to Boro woes

Ian Ross

FABRIZIO RAVANELLI took an unseasonal swipe at English football yesterday to ensure that Middlesbrough's season of rancour continued into the festive period.

coaching methods, in an undiplomatic outburst which will not appeal to Middlesbrough's troubled manager Bryan Robson. Speaking on an Italian TV sports programme, Ravanelli said he trained alone on Teesside using charts supplied by his previous club, Juventus.

have tons of money but they lack the organisation of Italian soccer. "The training facilities are not adequate. The stadiums are nice but the rest is just not there... there are no gyms and you don't practise very much. I am forced to train by myself using charts that the Juventus trainer faxes to me.

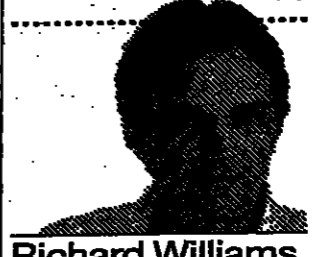
as for explosiveness and reaction time they cannot match the Italians. In soccer you have to do more than run. Middlesbrough paid £7 million for Ravanelli last summer, making him the highest-paid footballer in Britain on a reported salary of £40,000 a week. But despite recent statements to the contrary, the man they call the White Feather

— who only three months ago was being linked with Manchester United — is now clearly ill at ease with the prospect of a prolonged fight for Premiership survival.



Ravanelli... 'trains alone'

Armstrong, endurance and intimacy



Richard Williams

A HAPPY Christmas to all and sundry, but particularly to Lance Armstrong, the 25-year-old American bicycle racer who was discovered three months ago to be suffering from testicular cancer and is currently recovering from chemotherapy at his home in Austin, Texas.

longest day, sharing baths and massages, or alone with their quiet despair. Fausto Coppi sits with his feet in the bidet. Louison Bobet stares into a glass of wine. Federico Bahamontes perches on his suitcase at Dunkirk station, waiting for the train home. Gino Bartali accepts a raincoat around his shoulders as he abandons the race on the freezing snow of the Col de l'Iseran.

This is not a history book; its only appeal to statisticians is a list of all the winners since 1903. Instead it sees the Tour through the personalities of its leading performers, the men who have held the unofficial title of patron and those who have challenged them.

Most of us first noticed Armstrong when he won a flat-road stage early in the 1993 Tour de France and there was a brief flash about a new American prodigy. A few days later, when the race reached the high Alps, he entered the unknown. One night in the sidestation of Serre-Chevalier, after a day of being nursed to the finish by his team-mates, he lay exhausted in his bunk and talked about giving up.

HE WAS already noted for his anti-fascist sympathies, which attracted threats against his life. And when he was found dead by the side of a road near his home one midsummer day in 1927, covered in blood after apparently falling from his machine during a training run, the rumours mounted.

But the big stage races make unique demands, and I thought of his plight on that evening in Serre-Chevalier as I looked through the pages of a new book called *An Intimate Portrait of the Tour de France* (Bouquins Publications, £29.99), a collection of remarkable black-and-white photographs mostly drawn from the archives of L'Equipe, with a highly coloured text by Philippe Brunel.

No matter. We may never know the truth about Botticchia's death, but here is the essence of his life. In a maize field somewhere in France, he mends a puncture. He sprays his dust-covered face from a soda bottle. And he joins his fellow competitors at a feeding station, taking the shade of a tobacco cigarette which, as Brunel says, could have been executed by Renoir: an image capturing sport's beauty, and its pathos.


Shearer beaten by Sammer to Europe's Golden Ball

ALAN SHEARER, so often on target for England and Newcastle, was yesterday beaten to the Golden Ball, the European Footballer of the Year award, by Matthias Sammer of Germany.


goals for Blackburn before his world record-breaking transfer to St James' Park. Sammer, the 28-year-old Borussia Dortmund sweeper, is the fifth German winner of the award — a poll of European soccer writers by France Football magazine after Gerd Müller, Franz Beckenbauer and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (both twice) and Lothar Matthäus. "I was hoping to be in the top five but I have been injured for a while and I didn't know how the jury would react to that," he said.

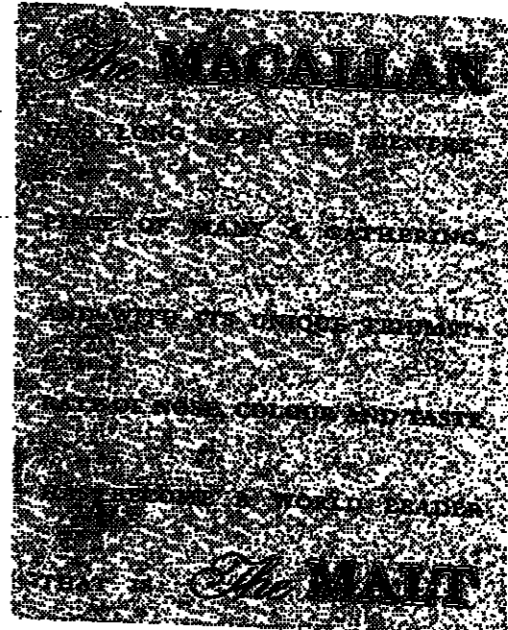
Double Prize Crossword, G2 page 13

A GET TOGETHER



The MALT





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